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ALL THAT MATTERS

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ALL THAT MATTERS





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CHARLES MACEVOY

ALL THAT MATTERS

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

CHARLES MACEVOY

NOTE.—*All rights in this play in the United Kingdom are vested in HERBERT TRENCH, of the English Drama Company, Haymarket Theatre. The slight abridgments necessary for acting purposes may be ascertained on application to the owner of these rights.*

PREFATORY NOTE

IN conformity with the catholic variety of programme originally outlined by the present management of the Haymarket Theatre, the plays hitherto performed have been of widely different character.

Starting with Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear*, we have produced successively Rudolf Besier's first comedy *Don*; Maurice Maeterlinck's first fairy play *The Blue Bird*; Elizabeth Arnim's first play, the light comedy *Priscilla Runs Away*; and next, a revival of *The Blue Bird*.

In order that our wheel may come full circle, we now attempt a realistic play of a kind wholly different from any of the foregoing.

I regard it as an honour to be able for the first time to introduce to the audience of an important London theatre the work of Mr. Charles MacEvoy—a young English writer already known elsewhere by his *David Ballard* and other plays in the provinces.

Perhaps it is unfitting for me to judge the quality of *All That Matters*; and our performance well may fail. But whether it fail or succeed (and those best qualified to know will recognise the great technical difficulties inherent in a work so delicately beautiful), I shall not regret as long as I live attempting to bring before the public a true piece of English country life in a true piece of English literature.

HERBERT TRENCH.

ATHENÆUM CLUB.

CHARACTERS

OLIVE

MRS. KIMBER

RACHAEL STRONG

MRS. MASON

PHŒBE MASON

MISS FENNER

MISS BANKS

A SERVANT GIRL

ALLAN HYDE

STANLEY KIMBER

HENRY PACY

JAMES GILL

ISAC STRONG

KENNETH MASON

MR. TISDALE

MR. TWIDLE

MRS. BOYD

SCENES

Act I., Scene 1—The Living Room at
Allan Hyde's Farm, near
Woolstone, Dorset.

Scene 2—A Sheep-Fold on the
Downs.

Act II.—The Drawing-Room at Kimber's
Farm, near Woolstone.

Act III.—The same.

Act IV., Scene 1—A Cave near Woolstone.

Scene 2—The Sheep-Fold.

TIME.—July. The present.

Two hours elapse between the scenes in Act I.

Two days between Acts I. and II.

Two weeks between Acts III. and IV.

The scenes in Act IV. are divided by the night.

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ACT I.

SCENE 1.—*The Manor House, Hollowcoombe Bay, Dorset.*

An audience fronts two walls of the main living room of an old manor, now a farmhouse and gone to neglect and decay. The main wall runs from the nearer left-hand corner to the farther right; meaning an audience's left and right. In the main wall is a large window with fine stone mullions. In the lesser wall to the right is a finely carved open fireplace, with high overhead a great coat-of-arms cut out of the wall itself, and like the carving about the fireplace, much blunted and smoke-grimed. The place is very bare and dilapidated, but retains a grandeur that would excite a lover of the old. Fine beams run to the main wall in lines parallel with the lesser. The floor is paved with great stone flags, and the only door is one at the right of the main wall, finely panelled. There is also a panelled cupboard-door to the right of the fireplace. The main furniture is a monstrously heavy-looking table that, like the beams, runs parallel with the lesser

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· wall ; a fine carved table that looks old enough to be a part of the house itself, and too heavy to have ever been removed. A bench, or form, runs to the left of it, and the only other furniture is an arm-chair to the left of the fireplace, two or three smaller chairs, and an old chest of drawers to the left of the window, with, for ornaments, such articles as would be found in a cottage rather than a farmhouse. Through the window, which is almost facing an audience, one sees the walls and thatched roof of a great barn across a courtyard.

The only occupant of the room is a very old woman, sitting in the armchair looking into the fireplace. She is dressed in shabby black, with a black woollen cap, a white coarse apron, and a stone brooch at her neck. Her hands are folded on her lap, and she is looking into the fire, which is burning low in the grate. This woman is RACHAEL STRONG. On the table, at the right-hand end of it, is a quartz mug.

After a pause, an old man, carrying a shepherd's crook, comes in at the door at the back ; ISAC STRONG, a strange, gnarled, weather-beaten old figure, almost more like a scarecrow than a man, and yet with a fine old head on him ; cheerful, intelligent eyes, glinting out of a face that is a patchwork

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of ragged hair, and withered, twisted features with patches of bright colour about the cheeks. His costume is a medley of black clothes, arranged to keep him warm on the downs; black clothes that the weather has turned nearly to green. There is a black coat, with a cape to it over all, fastened across his chest with pieces of string, and a tall-crowned old felt hat with a frayed band worn almost white. At his heels a dog that keeps close to him always. He looks tired and troubled, and after a glance at the old woman, goes to the end of the form and sits down near the mug. He takes a long draught, places it down again, and looks again at the old woman. Puts crook on bench R. of table.)

(Wind and smoke.)

RACHAEL (*sourly*)

Hold your tongue, Isac, if you want to talk to me. (*Puts hat on bench R. of table.*)

ISAC

Maybe I don't want to talk to you.

(*Sits on bench.*)

RACHAEL

Very well, then.

ISAC

'Tis the time for patience, Rachael; at what might be at the end of a thing like this?
(*Puts his hat and crook on the table.*)

ALL THAT MATTERS

I thought I'd see if the master was about
anywhere—and I thought I'd take me
lunch. *(Sits on bench L.)*

RACHAEL *(bitterly)*

The master.

ISAC

Can't you speak civil of the boy, Rachael?

RACHAEL

A fine master, now. The poor cracked fellow.

ISAC

Very well. The fine weather's done with, any-
way.

RACHAEL

Aye.

ISAC *(buttoning up his coat)*

This morning when I went up to the sheep
first thing, they was all on the move, and
I knew what it meant then. *(Coming
down to c. Wind and waft of smoke at
the chimney.)* That's a surer sign than
any weather-glass, when you sees they all
on the skip and the jump. Auld sheep'll
play like lambs when there's foul weather
coming. The fools.

RACHAEL

There be other fools besides sheep.

ISAC *(picks up hat and crook)*

All right, all right. *(Up to door.)*

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RACHAEL (*turns*)

You're not going to caddle yourself going up
on they hills again, are you?

ISAC

I yent satisfied with the look of the weather.

RACHAEL

Can you alter it?

ISAC

That's true enough. I can't alter it. (*Moves
down a step c.*) If I could I'd have the
hay up on they medders made and done
with. But I gave the master fair enough
warning of it. 'Tis too late now. Yes,
I know what you'd be saying, Rachael,
that 'tis too late for the best of hay to be
of any use to us now, but hay's hay, and
'tis but right it should be made in its
time.

RACHAEL

I'll not raise me hand from me lap again. If
'tis Woolstone workhouse, the sooner I
goes there the better.

ISAC

I'd rather say the longer I keeps out of it, the
better.

RACHAEL (*looking up at crest*)

And the master a Hyde. His father did make
some fight for it. He gived way inch by
inch. But this cracked fool's done
nothing. (*ISAC comes down L.C. a step.*)

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He's cracked. All I've seen of him to-day was to moon in once, and moon out again. Any timid thing in the fields'll fight if its driven to a corner, but he's dazed and cracked.

ISAC (C.)

We don't know all, Rachael, from the little bit we sees looking into a man's face. And you don't allow, neither, for what a lonely life means to the young. The young byent like we old uns, you know, Rachael. They yent even got a lot of memories to amuse theirselves with. The young needs company, Rachael. Not a lonely life.

RACHAEL

Company?

ISAC

Aye.

RACHAEL

He's got company, hasn't he? I've been first up in this house, and last down, always.

ISAC

Fine companionship the pair of us, with our poor feet in the grave.

RACHAEL

That's enough now.

ISAC

It byent the easiest time in a man's life, nor yet the safest, when he be young, Rachael.

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Some be young and thoughtless, and others be young and over thoughtful. (*Looks round, then steps to her.*) Have you never wished one thing? (*Hesitating.*)

RACHAEL

What?

ISAC

Have you never wished the master might have looked to a woman?

RACHAEL

What?

ISAC

Have you never wished it might have happened that he'd found some comfort in the lawful love of one. Haven't you wished it?

RACHAEL

A woman?

(*HYDE enters just as the old woman speaks; by the door at the back. His age is twenty-five. His face is bronzed and yet thin and ill-looking, with the eyes gleaming and deep sunk. He is poorly, almost shabbily, dressed.*)

ISAC

'Sh! hold your tongue.

(*HYDE comes down L.C. to cupboard down L., takes out an old overcoat, and as if in total abstraction, turns back to the door. As*

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he passes ISAC, without actually looking at him, he speaks.)

HYDE (*as he goes*)

I'm going up to the sheep.

(*He strides off, closing the door behind him.*)

RACHAEL

He's dazed enough for me to think that that's what he's done sometimes. He's the mooning fool that a man might be that'd got a woman on his brain.

ISAC,

'Tis a small opinion you has of women, Rachael. (*He turns to the door.*)

RACHAEL (*as he gets to c.*)

You don't want to go out again. (*He turns.*)
If he's going up to the sheep, let him see to 'em hisself. You don't want to wear yourself out going up there for nothing.

ISAC (*petulant*)

Why do you tell me I dont *want* to do a thing when you know very well I do? You mean that *you* don't want me to do it. (*Turns up to door, then comes down again.*)

'Tis my principle, if there's anything to be done, *do it*, and if there's nothing to be done, get about and do something.

(*Moves to door.*)

RACHAEL

Aye, aye.

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ISAC (*turns to c.*)

Look yer, Rachael, listen yer: my call wur to the fold when I wur born, and while there's work to my hands I must do't. Not for bums nor bailiffs, but for God Almighty. Everything must go on in its order, everything in its rotation. 'Tis His ordainment, and 'tis all that matters. The rotation of things.

(*He pulls his hat on to his head, and the next moment there is a shout of hilarious laughter from outside, and ISAC comes back—shuts door.*)

RACHAEL (*getting up*)

What be that?

ISAC (*shuts the door*)

'Tis a lot of they there Cockney holiday-makers, from Woolstone I should reckon. All about our gate.

RACHAEL (*going towards the window*)

Not coming yer, they byent. I wunt be caddled with they?

(*ISAC goes with her to the window, and there is another hilarious scream from outside.*)

ISAC

Finding something terrible funny about the water butt.

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RACHAEL

Anything seems good enough for they to laugh at—they Londoners.

ISAC

Fine spirrets they brings on their holiday-making. (*Laugh outside.*) But they must be poor creatures the rest of the year, the way every little thing'll tickle 'em when they be off their chains.

RACHAEL

'Tis a main few on 'em. I suppose they be only out walking—so let 'em walk.

ISAC

I be going, anyway. (*Goes to door.*)

RACHAEL

Well, shut the gate arter you as you goes out.

(*ISAC goes out. Murmurs from Cockneys when he is out.*)

RACHAEL pulls to the muslin curtains at the bottom of the window. RACHAEL crosses to table L. takes up basin, and crosses to cupboard up R.; puts it away and comes down to fire-place R.)

(*As she gets to cupboard put light No. on for ISAC to enter.*)

(*ISAC returns ; comes to C.*)

ISAC (*abruptly*)

Wants to come in and mend their clothes.

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RACHAEL

Mend their what?

ISAC (*laughs*)

Torn theirselves on Mr. Pacy's barbed wire. He caught 'em on the top of the cliffs and hunted 'em off. You'll have to let 'em come in.

RACHAEL

I dwunt want 'em. Best to have no hands with they.

ISAC

'Tis a case of accident, I tell 'e, and 'tis no good talking agin it. Besides, you can't argue with 'em. 'Tis Cockney holiday-makers. Chent as if it was nat'ral people. (*He goes to the window.*) 'Tis a queer race as they be breeding in the towns, now. Got no understanding at all of nat'ral things. Nigh bust thurselves when they seed I. . . . Everything's comical to 'em, except theirselves. (*There is a shrill whistle from outside. ISAC goes towards the door.*) All right. All right.

(*Moves up, puts crook in. He goes off.*)

(*From an outer door KENNITH MASON, of the party, is heard speaking.*)

KENNITH (*off*)

Is it all right?

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ISAC (*from outside*)
It'll be all right. (*He reappears in the doorway.*) Yer, Rachael.

(*Over above her to R.—puts crook c.*)

RACHAEL goes to the door.)

RACHAEL

Will you come into this room, please?

KENNITH (*from the doorway*)

Oh, thank you. (*Wipes feet.*)

(*There comes into the doorway, but not yet into the room, some seven people of distinct London origin.*)

(*Stepping in*) If you don't mind. (*Comes down to c. over to R.*) Just for a few minutes. You know what it's for.

RACHAEL (*standing back*)

Come in, sir. (*Crosses down R; TISDALE to c.*)

Come in, ladies.

(*MRS. MASON comes in, a stout middle-aged lady, in a state bordering on hysteria of uncontrollable laughter.*)

(*TWIDLE to R. of door.*)

KENNITH

Had a bit of a shock, you know. (*To the others*) Come on.

RACHAEL

Nothing serious, I hope.

MRS. MASON (*comes down L.*)

It's only the lace of me underskirt.

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(*PHOEBE to above table. TWIDLE to down L. of table. MRS. MASON to below table.*)

(*She goes off by herself into a corner to the right, rather alarmed at her own hilarity. Dropping into a chair she bites her lips, looks grave and shrieks alternately.*)

MISS FENNER

I really can't see what Mrs. Mason's got to laugh at. I've nearly torn the bloose off me back. I say, though, this is rather a find, isn't it?

(*MISS FENNER is a spinster of nearly forty.*)

KENNITH.

Never mind about the find just now. I want to find my breath. That's what I want to find.

MISS BANKS.

That's quite right, Mr. Mason.

(*She is very like MISS FENNER, but perhaps a little younger.*)

TISDALE (*crosses down L. to below table. To the others*)

Here, I should sit down. Mrs. Mason oughtn't to go on like that, you know.

(*He is a loose, portly man of fifty.*)

PHOEBE (*goes down L. to table*)

No, she oughtn't. Don't go on, mother.

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(She is the younger and prettier of the women.)

MRS. MASON

It's so funny.

KENNITH

Funny! I went on the back of me head once, you know. Heard half the plates in me camera go. I'll have to have a look at it presently.

MISS FENNER

It's surprising how hard you do fall sometimes.

MISS BANKS

That's quite right.

RACHAEL

You're on a holiday, I suppose, ladies?

(Up to window.)

KENNITH

If you can call it a holiday to come on the back of your head, and be chased over half a mile of cliffs, I suppose we are.

ISAC

Mr. Pacy did that to you? *(Up to KENNITH.)*

KENNITH

Who?

ISAC

Mr. Henry Pacy, sir, if you've been up on the cliffs. The gentleman at the Headland House.

KENNITH

Pacy, is it?

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MISS FENNER

The Headland House.

MRS. MASON

Oh, the 'Eadland House.

ISAC

Mr. Pacy be a gentleman as likes things
private to 'isself.

TISDALE

Well, I'd like to *Pacy* him.

KENNITH

The blighter.

PHŒBE (*comes down a step*)

Well, of course, we were in the wrong; we saw
the notice boards "Private Property"
and "Trespassers will be prosecuted," and
all that. We didn't think anybody'd see
us, though. (*Moves over to TWIDLE.*)

MISS FENNER

I don't call it wrong. I call it a shame.
Come down for a holiday.

MISS BANKS

Find you can't go anywhere at all.

MRS. MASON

The land's free to everyone, or ought to be.

MISS FENNER

The cliffs, anyway.

MISS BANKS

That's quite right.

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RACHAEL

Yes, miss.

MISS FENNER

We *chose* Woolstone from the map. Looked like a quiet and refined little place, just near the sea, a bit of country as well, and now find you can't go anywhere. We only come last night, but if its going to be like this.

ISAC

Which way did 'e come here? (*Crosses over in front of c.*) Did 'e come across a field of mangels?

KENNITH

Came over the downs from Woolstone.

MISS FENNER

That was all right, heather and all that.

ISAC

You should have come across they field of mangels.

KENNITH

It was cliffs we were looking for, not mangels, and when we found them there was the barbed wire.

TISDALE

And the notice boards.

KENNITH

We got under the wire.

MISS FENNER

Didn't think there'd be anybody about, really.

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MISS BANKS

We were going to try and get down to the beach, weren't we, Gertie?

MISS FENNER

Then we heard him hollering, "What are you doing over there?" and half-a-dozen great dogs with him.

ISAC

That's be Mr. Pacy himself.

(Goes to window. Sits.)

KENNITH *(pointing to TWIDLE)*

It was him *(Points to TWIDLE. All look at TWIDLE)* started running, and then we all did. I've torn a new pair of boots.

MISS BANKS *(rises)*

Well, we all got *something*, 'aven't we, Gertie?
(Sits again.)

MISS FENNER

When we came to this track we followed it down. We could see the house at the bottom.

MRS. MASON

And now we'd like to stitch ourselves up a bit before we go any farther. That's all.

RACHAEL *(rises, comes down c.)*

It's not very nice, is it, ma'am? I'll find you needle *(PHÆBE moves down a step)* and cotton. Especially if you're on a holiday, it's not very nice.

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(She goes to the drawer of the little table.)

(MISS BANKS rises, crosses to fire. KENNETH rises ; goes fire.)

MRS. MASON

Well, I suppose you would call it a holiday, though, whatever it's like. We happen to be having three weeks of it. My daughter, Phœbe there, usually travels with me, and my son Kenneth has read up a bit for the law. I daresay you'd have heard of my late 'usband, the judge—Judge Mason.

RACHAEL

We don't hear much here, ma'am.

MRS. MASON

Major Tisdale happens to be having three weeks of it. We all happen to be in the same boarding establishment, well, Private Hotel I suppose you'd call it—at Woolstone.

RACHAEL

Yes, ma'am.

MISS FENNER

I suppose you wouldn't have heard of my grandfather, Admiral Fenner ?

RACHAEL

We don't hear much, miss.

MISS FENNER

I thought, being near the sea . . .

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MISS BANKS

My uncle was a naval doctor, wasn't he, Gertie?
I suppose you haven't heard of him—
Dr. Banks? But, of course, you wouldn't.
Not here.

MRS. MASON (*looks round for him*)
And Mr. Twidle is staying for his health.
For three weeks.

MR. TWIDLE (*shyly*)
I've had influenza.

MRS. MASON
The son of a gentleman farmer. More Suffolk
way.

RACHAEL
Can I be getting you anything else, ladies?
(*Comes down a step.*) Here's the sewing
things, here.

(MISS FENNER *goes up, gets things.*)

MRS. MASON
Oh! thank you.

(TWIDLE *to window seat; sits.*)

MISS FENNER
P'r'aps we could 'ave a little water. (*Takes
basket.*)

RACHAEL
Yes, miss. I'll draw some.
(PHOEBE *crosses to head of table.*)
(RACHAEL *goes out at back L.C.*)
(ALL *giggle.*)

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MISS FENNER

It's not hot really, you can hear the wind in here, but I daresay we're all hotter than we think we are. I always think I'm cooler than I am, when I'm anywhere near the sea.

MISS BANKS

That's quite right.

MISS FENNER. (*Goes above table to l. of it, taking up the sewing material.* MRS. MASON follows; also PHŒBE)

Here. Come over here, Mrs. Mason.

(MRS. MASON rises, gets round to above table. MISS BANKS crosses to above table; PHŒBE moves down to them; MRS. MASON commences sewing operations; the other ladies following.)

(TISDALE comes down, sits bench. FENNER pokes TWIDLE in back; he rises, goes up and sits at back c. TWIDLE crosses, sits arm-chair.)

(ISAC approaches the remaining group, who are also to be left.)

ISAC (*comes down*)

Another time, sir (*to TWIDLE*), you steer straight for they mangels when you leave Woolstone (*crosses over to c. to TISDALE*). That'll take 'e by the house yer, sir, and the sea's not a quarter of a mile below.

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You'll find a bit of beach down there. It happens to go with our farm here; though 'tis in the middle of Mr. Pacy's, as you might say.

MISS FENNER

I say! There is some sea, then?

KENNITH

Oh!

ISAC (*moves over to L.C.*)

Ay, and some girt caves down there, too, but you'll find Mr. Pacy's wire right and left of you. You can't go but a little ways. As I says, this just breaks in the middle of his property. If it wasn't for us being yer, Mr. Pacy'd have the whole stretch of the cove, and you'd not get nigh the sea nowhere.

KENNITH

Who's got this place here, then?

ISAC

My master, sir. Mr. Allan Hyde.

MISS FENNER

He doesn't live *here*?

ISAC

Aye, miss. We be but poor tenant farmers. 'Tis a pity as you couldn't have come yer a hundred years ago, miss.

MISS FENNER

Thank you!

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ISAC

If you understand my meaning, in them days
all the country around here belonged to
the Hydes, my master's family. (*Gets
crook, points with crook over to c.*)
There's the girt crest of the Hydes now—
(*All move over*)—over the mantelshelf.
That's what the Hydes have been.

(KENNITH *gets on armchair.*)

MISS FENNER (*comes down L. of table with MISS
BANKS, leaving her sewing*)

I say, I was looking at that.

ISAC

Two full sheaves of corn, and a female's hand
with a wedding ring on the proper finger.
Underneath be the words in Latin, "All
That Matters."

KENNITH (*reading out the motto*)

"Quid cetera prosunt."

(MISS FENNER *giggles.* ISAC *turns to her.*)

ISAC

'Tis a conundrum what it might mean.

(*Crosses to down R.*)

(*They all go and see the Arms; impressed.*)

MISS FENNER

That's very funny.

MISS BANKS

Yes, it is funny it should have that on it, isn't
it?

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MR. TISDALE

Ah!

KENNITH

It'd make a fine photograph, if you could get up at it.

MISS BANKS

Make a nice picture postcard!

MRS. MASON

What a pretty little hand!

MISS FENNER

It want's cleaning though, doesn't it? I mean the stone.

PHOEBE

I think that'd spoil it.

(Sits on edge of table at back.)

MR. TISDALE

What is it matters?

MISS FENNER

More than one opinion on that I should think.

KENNITH

Give me five hundred a year!

ISAC

Some says as its Peace, Prosperity (*turns to others*), and a woman's love. (*His eyes twinkle.*) But last brings t'other, dun it?
(Crosses to fire.)

MRS. MASON.

It's supposed to.

MR. TISDALE.

You're not sure? *(She nudges him.)*

ALL THAT MATTERS

MISS FENNER.

There's something solemn about it, to me.

(Sits bottom table.)

MR. TISDALE *(turning to his friends)*

You never know what you might be missing
when you go by these old places, do you?

MISS BANKS

That's quite right!

(Sits bench.)

ISAC

The present Hyde—my master—be the last of
them. The family's gone to nothing, as
you might say. The estate was sold
away from the Hydcs these years.

MISS FENNER

But there's one of the family here still, isn't
there?

MRS. MASON

I daresay he can account for that.

(Over to bench ; sits.)

ISAC

'Tis by a stipulation in the ancient deeds,
ma'am. . . . and in them deeds it
says that so long as the Hydcs pays their
rent they shall abide the tenants of the
Manor House and five hundred acres, and
it sha'n't be sold away from them. Them
as bought it broke up the estate, and the
sea frontage was bought by Mr. Pacy, all
but this bit which he couldn't buy,

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because it couldn't be sold. Now, do you understand my meaning?

(TISDALE *moves over, sits above* MRS. MASON.)

KENNITH

Very nimbly put.

ISAC

And that's how it is that we be yer to-day in the middle of Mr. Pacy's property. Like a knife in the middle of it, as you might say.

KENNITH

And may you long remain. Since you've got a sea frontage to you.

MISS FENNER

And don't wire it in.

MISS BANKS

That's quite right.

MISS FENNER

And I suppose the downs we came over are your master's farm.

TISDALE

His five hundred acres.

ISAC (*tickled*)

Five hundred. (*Moves over to c.*) There's five thousand acres up there, miss. Our farm be but a spadeful of earth in the middle of it (*indicates with crook*), as you might say. That byent Mr. Pacy's now.

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That belongs to Mr. Kimber, the girt sheep farmer. Mr. Stanley Kimber, sir. . . . He bought the downland when Mr. Pacy bought the cliffs—and we breaks into Kimber's stretch of downs, just the same as we breaks into Mr. Pacy's stretch of sea front.

KENNITH

You're a sort of nuisance to your neighbours, then.

PHOEBE

Kennith!

ISAC

Aye, we be a sort of nuisance, if you might so name it—with both of them—Pacy and Kimber—waiting with their girt greedy mouths open to snatch the place up. If it should fall through and come to the market, they'll worry one another like a couple of dogs with a bone. Aye, wuss than two dogs, they'll fight for it, Pacy and Kimber would.

KENNITH

Well, who owns the place then? Who is it that you pay your rent *to*?

ISAC

Lord Latham, sir. Lord Latham of Woolstone. 'Twas the Lathams as bought the old Hyde estate. 'Twas the Lathams as that ancient deed was made with—if you

ALL THAT MATTERS

understand my meaning—and 'tis Lord Latham as be our landlord to-day.

MRS. MASON

Now my 'usband was a judge. . . . Why doesn't your master make a good bargain for himself. Give up his lease on the understanding that he's paid a handsome compensation.

ISAC (*over to L.C.*)

Because 'tis no sweet thing to a Hyde to be the one to go, ma'am. Because 'twould be the end of all of us on the farm yer. Because 'tis his pride to stay, as the Hyde's right to by those deeds I told 'e on. (*Crosses to fireplace.*)

MRS. MASON (*Pause*)

Fiddlestrings! (*Pause.*) Of course he's got a better reason than that. Whatever it might be.

MISS FENNER (R.)

Well, he wouldn't have that over his mantelshelf if he went away.

MRS. MASON

Fiddlestrings!

KENNETH (*rises*)

Well, now, here's a proposition. Mr. Kimber owns the downs up at the top, where the heather grows.

MISS FENNER.

I appreciated his heather.

ALL THAT MATTERS

KENNITH

Exactly. Well, let's hope Mr. Kimber'll get this lot too if it does come on to the market. Kimber doesn't barb-wire his property in, so let's say good luck to your sheep farmer Kimber.

ISAC

Well, I'll tell 'e now, he's wuss than t'other, Kimber be. Pacy's spiteful that he can't get it, but t'other's at the bottom of half the ruination on the place.

KENNITH

Still, your Mr. Kimber isn't a barbed-wire blighter, you see; so we rather fancy him, if you don't mind. We fancy anybody that leaves the place a bit free to other people.

MISS BANKS

That's quite right.

TISDALE (*pointing out a tear on his coat sleeve; rises to c.*)

It's the stuff that tore *that* that interests us. The chap what first thought of it ought to have to eat all as was ever made.

(*Over to bench; sits above* MRS. BANKS.)

KENNITH

That's reasonable.

ALL THAT MATTERS

ISAC (*immediately heated at any defence of*
KIMBER)

Shall I tell 'e why there byent no barbed wire
on Mr. Kimber's downs? . . . It
byent because Kimber's got any principle.
'Tis because he's got a darter.

KENNITH

Because he's got a daughter!

(TISDALE *to bench; sits above* MRS.
MASON.)

ISAC

A darter as 'tis an everlasting conundrum as
her could have had. She be nigh a
woman now. A pretty fair-haired girl as
you might see one day, riding a bicycle to
Woolstun Grammar School, where her
teaches. And years back her got round
her father, Mr. Kimber, not to put no
wire up on the downs because 'twas the
walk of the poor people out of Woolstun.
. . . So you see, 'tis no good thanking
Kimber for that.

KENNITH

Well, good luck to the man with the daughter,
then. We'll put it that way.

ISAC

No good on to nobody 'e be'n't.

KENNITH

Still, its good luck to him, isn't it?

ALL THAT MATTERS

ISAC (*getting very heated*)

Kimber's times and times wuss than t'other,
Kimber be. Do I know or dwunt I?

KENNITH (*pinching a lock of his own hair*)

I should keep it on.

ISAC (*over to c.*)

The master's kicked Kimber out at that very
door there, if you'd like to know.

KENNITH (*being the cad of the party, he proceeds
to develop his bantering attitude towards the
old man*)

I say, did he?

PHŒBE

Don't, Kenneth.

ISAC (*to the ladies*)

Dwunt they say as the wuurst enemy a man
can have is one that he's befriended—

KENNITH

By kicking him out of the door.

PHŒBE

You make anybody ashamed of you.

ISAC

I'll tell 'e what Kimber come from. From
nothing. He worked yer as a bwoy.
Worked yer in all the muck and dirt
of our yards.

MISS FENNER

Well, of course, if he ever did that . . .

ALL THAT MATTERS

ISAC

Is it a reason he should be the worst enemy we've got? But no, 'tis like that I tell 'e when you 'elps a man. Kimber would wipe the name of the Hydes out altogether if he could have his way, because he hates the thought that he has been a servant to them.

MISS FENNER

Well, of course, if he's got money now, he doesn't want to be reminded of it.

ISAC

No one wants to remind him of it. He reminds himself.

MISS FENNER

Well, of course, if he's got money now—

ISAC

And 'twas made no better when Kimber went out at that door there.

KENNITH

Really.

ISAC

I'm talking of six years ago. Mr. Allan was a bwoy at the girt College of Oxford, where he'd passed to from Woolstone Grammar School, by free certificate. (*Looks at ladies L.*) If you understand my meaning.

MISS FENNER

I know what he means. I'll tell you presently.

ALL THAT MATTERS

ISAC

The master had died in the morning, and within an hour there comes yer Lord Latham's agent, and along with him Kimber. There was no rent owing, though it were on the nick of being due, and they knew well enough there was nothing here but debt and ruination. 'Twas their chance, as they thought, for the old lease to be done away with at last.

MISS FENNER

Well, of course, if it was like that—

ISAC.

Like what? There was a Hyde alive, wasn't there? But before I could speak Lord Latham's agent says to me, Mr. Kimber will be the new master here, and Kimber, right enough, was walking about in this very room as if the place was his'n already. The Hydies has got their rights here yet, I says, and they turned round and told me that Mr. Allan was a bwoy and didn't count.

MISS FENNER

Well, of course, if he was a boy—

ISAC

Bwoy or not then, Mr. Allan Hyde comed whoam. Aye, and as quick as lightning the pair of 'em found theirselves out at that door there with main big flies in their ears. And the young master found

ALL THAT MATTERS

his rent, and Lord Latham found he could do nothing. And so t'as been ever since. Kimber nicely done, and Pacy wanting to get it for hisself. And may none of 'em never be able to do nothing.

(Goes up to window seat for hat.)

MISS FENNER

Well, if ever there is a sale, I'd like to know.
I've taken a fancy to this table.

ISAC *(comes down to c.)*

The table'll stop where it be, I hope, miss.
And the Hyde's break bread on it.

KENNITH

If they're not broke themselves.

ISAC *(looking at him)*

It's a pity there byent more respect shown for a family name nowadays, sir. But a poor man's a poor man, yen yer.

(Moving over to door, picks up crook.)

PHŒBE *(rises ; comes forward)*

Thank you so much.

ISAC *(goes up to door ; picks up crook.)*

I must get to me sheep.

PHŒBE *(rises)*

Are you a real shepherd ?

ISAC *(turns)*

I yent a wooden one.

MISS BANKS

And have you got a real crook ?

ALL THAT MATTERS

ISAC

I've a stick with a bit of a hook on the end of it. Good arternoon.

(TWIDLE comes down a step. KENNITH beckons to MISS BANKS, she crosses to arm, sits. ISAC goes out.)

TISDALE (*rises*)

Well, he was a bit of a find, wasn't he?

MISS FENNER

You'd never think there's the life there is going on in these old houses.

MISS BANKS

That's quite right.

TISDALE (*looks up to ceiling*)

You see them stuck out on the hills. Old tumble-down places.

MISS FENNER

And they're everything to them that lives there.

TISDALE (*continues to look up*)

As I say, you see these old 'ouses, stuck in these out-of-the-way places. A few old stone buildings. A few old cows and 'orses walking around. A bit of a pond and some clothes drying on the 'edge.

MISS BANKS

A bit of smoke coming up out of the chimney.

PHOEBE

The flowers growing all round in the fields.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MISS FENNER (*facing audience and looking up*)
And it's all somebody's life. It makes you
think, doesn't it.

MRS. MASON.

I suppose they get accustomed to it.

(*The door opens, and RACHAEL comes
in with a jug of water and a
glass.*)

RACHAEL (*comes down C.L. of TISDALE pouring
out a glass, hands it to MISS FENNER*)

You'll find it nice and cool, ma'am. I've
drawn it fresh from the well.

(*Pours out, puts jug on table.*)

MRS. MASON

Oh, thank you.

PHOEBE

We're putting you to a lot of trouble I'm
afraid. (*Over to bench, sits.*)

RACHAEL

It's no trouble, miss.

MISS FENNER

We've had such a talk with your husband.
He's told us everything.

RACHAEL

As long as he hasn't told you more than he
knows himself, miss.

KENNETH

I wish he'd stopped to get photographed. But
I'll take some presently before I go, if my
plates aren't broken.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. MASON

He's been telling us all about the state of the land round here.

RACHAEL (L.C.—*hopelessly*)

Yes, ma'am.

MRS. MASON

I wish we could do something. . . . Does Mr. Pacy happen to be single?

RACHAEL

Yes, ma'am. He's a single gentleman.

MRS. MASON (*to the others*)

You know, there's a beautiful way out of everything. (RACHAEL *puts jug on table.*)

KENNITH (*after a pause*)

Wait for Pacy with a shot-gun, I should think.

MRS. MASON

No. (*Rises.*) Wait for him with a bow and arrow.

PHŒBE

Mother!

MRS. MASON

You're all very dull, you know.

TISDALE

What do you mean?

MRS. MASON

Why doesn't somebody put it into Mr. Pacy's head to marry Mr. Kimber's daughter; that would settle the barbed-wire question.

ALL THAT MATTERS

TWIDLE

Hear! hear!

RACHAEL (*laughing*)

Oh dear, ma'am.

MRS. MASON

Well, if she's stopped her father from wiring in the downs, why shouldn't she stop her husband—when she's got him—from wiring in the cliffs?

RACHAEL

Oh dear!

(*Up to window.*)

TISDALE

Send a round robin, I suppose. Signed by seven suffering visitors.

MISS BANKS

Send him a picture postcard.

RACHAEL

Oh dear, miss.

(*The notion curiously tickles her.*)

MRS. MASON

To send him a letter. We needn't sign it, and just give him the idea for what it's worth.

MISS FENNER

I should do it.

KENNITH

And I reckon they ought to put up a monument to us if it comes off.

MISS BANKS

That's quite right.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. MASON

Under his nose, and probably never entered his head. He'd have done it himself if he'd thought of it. . . . It brings the property all under one family. A very good match for the girl, with everything going to her children.

MISS FENNER

Well, that's looking rather a long way ahead. What we want now's a pen and paper.

KENNETH (*to RACHAEL*)

You don't mind if we write it here?

RACHAEL

P'r'aps it'll keep his mind off other mischief.

MRS. MASON

We sha'n't put any address on, you know, or sign it.

MISS FENNER

Just give him the idea.

MISS BANKS

That's right.

RACHAEL

'Tis a bit of fun, I suppose. You're not going to send it?

TISDALE (*to MRS. MASON*)

Are we?

(There is an air of not intending it all the time.)

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. MASON

You give me a sheet of paper and envelope and a pen and ink.

PHÆBE

What an idea to have got in our heads.

MR. TWIDLE

It makes me laugh.

KENNITH

Let's have the necessaries.

RACHAEL (*going to the drawer of the smaller table*)

You never mean it, I know, ma'am.

(*She brings out writing materials, comes down to below table, very amused*)

One of they pens 'll write. The paper's a bit mildewy. It gets like that here.

(MRS. MASON *up to table.*)

KENNITH.

I saw a post-box under the wall outside.

MISS BANKS.

I've got some halfpenny stamps.

RACHAEL.

There's everything you want, then.

(*She goes off, very tickled.*)

PHÆBE (*up to table*)

You're not really going to write, mother.

MRS. MASON (*picking up the writing material, sits in window seat, going up to back*)

You leave it to me. Everybody leave it to me.

ALL THAT MATTERS

KENNITH

You want some help, don't you? (*A step c.*)

MISS FENNER

How are you going to begin?
(*Goes to L of table.*)

MRS. MASON

I'm going to quietly think it out. You all go on talking about something else.

TISDALE

It's Mrs. Mason's patent, you know.

KENNITH

Well, what person are you going to write it in?

MRS. MASON

I don't know yet. Leave it to a woman's superior judgment.

KENNITH

Oh, look here, I shouldn't waste the time like this.

MISS FENNER

That's all right. You leave your mother alone.

KENNITH (*crosses to L of table, picking up his changing bag*)

I'll have a look at my plates, then. Anyone help me with this changing bag?

(*TISDALE to window. He puts it on the bottom end of the long table together with his camera and a packet of plates which he takes from his pocket. Sits on R. of*

ALL THAT MATTERS

*table, feet on form. TISDALE up
to window, sits.)*

MISS BANKS

What do you want done?

(Crosses to KENNITH L.)

KENNITH

If you'll button up the neck when I've got in.

MISS FENNER

That's handy I should think when you've got
no dark room. *(She looks back at MRS.
MASON.)* All right, we won't make a
noise. *(Goes to L. of table.)*

PHÆBE *(comes down a step)*

I don't know how Kennith can put up with
that silly thing. He made it himself, ex-
cept mother did the stitching.

MR. TISDALE

Is it a patent?

KENNITH

Well, it's more or less been superseded. I did
think of taking out a provisional, though.
Here, now if you don't mind. *(He has
put the camera and the box of plates inside,
now he passes his hands through two elastic
wristholes.)* Well, first of all stand out of
the light. I mean after I'm in. You see,
that's all the light I've got, through that
ruby cloth. You just button it up at the
neck. That's all.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MR. TWIDLE (*moves over to c.*)
I shouldn't like to get in there.

KENNITH (*putting in his head with dignity—to*
TWIDLE.)

As long as you all keep out of the light.
(*From within the bag.*) Now, please.
(*TWIDLE down to fire.*)

MISS FENNER (*doing up the button at the back*)
Pity he can't take a photograph of himself.

(MR. TISDALE *guides MR. TWIDLE out*
of the light. MRS. MASON *looks*
up from her letter.)

MRS. MASON
You know I don't like to see you in that thing,
Kennith.

KENNITH (*rather irritably from within the bag*)
That's all right, mother.

(*The bag is seen moving and shaking.*)

MR. TISDALE (*rises, gets in light, crosses over*
to c.)

There's one thing I should like to suggest to
Mrs. Mason. (*Comes down c.*)

(*He takes up a position between the*
bag and the window.)

KENNITH (*from within the bag*)
Would you kindly get out of the light?
(? *Back to R. of window seat.*)

MR. TISDALE (*moving*)
All right. I was only going to say I should
disguise my writing.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MISS FENNER

Why should she? Nobody knows her.

MR. TISDALE

That's true.

MRS. MASON

I'm disguising it as much as I can.

KENNITH (*from the bag*)

Hang! (*The others look towards the spot.*)

MISS FENNER

You're all right in there, aren't you?

PHŒBE

It's his own fault if he isn't.

KENNITH (*in a stifled voice*)

I don't know what I'm doing. I'm half suffocated, though. I know that.

MISS FENNER

Shall I let some air in?

KENNITH

Is anybody in the light?

PHŒBE

No.

KENNITH

Yes, let some air in, quick, at the back.
Don't let any light in if you can help it.

(MISS FENNER *attends to him, opening the back of the bag and working it like a bellows.*)

KENNITH

This is frightful. I've got the box upset, and

ALL THAT MATTERS

all the sheaths loose. I shall spoil the lot. None of those plates were broken.

PHÆBE

I shouldn't mind about the plates. I should come out.

KENNITH

Oh! (*He gives in and comes out from the bag, purple and breathless; shaking the contents out on to the table.*) There's the lot gone. All I took this morning and a box of plates as well. Go on, let the light get at them all it likes now. (*Crosses to c. He glares at Phæbe.*) Why couldn't you leave me alone. What you want to make me come out for?

PHÆBE

You came out yourself!

KENNITH

My luck, isn't it? And all those plates gone. Everything I did. Three or four of them we took last night. I never had such interesting subjects. (*To Miss Banks.*) That one of you on the weighing-machine and all. Oh, I shall give it up.

(*Kicks bag, goes to R.*)

MRS. MASON

Listen and I'll read the letter.

(*Comes down c.*)

MISS FENNER

Now be quiet, everybody.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. MASON

Well then, listen. (*All cluster round—FENNER to below, PHÆBE to top end of bench.*) (*She reads.*) “To Henry Pacy, Esq., The Headland House, near Woolstone. Sir, suppose you were to think about marrying Mr. Kimber’s daughter, wouldn’t it be rather a good idea? A well-wisher.” That’s all. Just that. Don’t you think that’s neat?

KENNITH

Rotten!

MRS. MASON

And I’ve done the envelope and everything. I think that’s very neatly put myself.
(*Crosses to MISS BANKS L.*)

MISS BANKS

You did disguise your writing.

MRS. MASON (*to MISS BANKS*)

Can I have your stamp?

MISS BANKS (*giving a stamp*)

You’ll want two, won’t you? I always use halfpenny ones because of me postcards.

KENNITH

If you’d taken my advice you’d have written it in the third person.

(*RACHAEL comes into the room to R. of*
MRS. MASON *to C.*)

RACHAEL

Can I do anything more for you, ma’am?

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MRS. MASON

I don't think there's anything else, thank you.
We've finished the letter.

RACHAEL (*alarmed*)

You're not going to send it?

MRS. MASON

Of course we are. You see if the people round
here won't be glad we came this afternoon.
. . . Though they won't know it was
us, of course.

RACHAEL

'Tis a flying in the face of Providence, ma'am.

MRS. MASON

You wouldn't mind if he did marry her?

RACHAEL

I don't mind who marries anybody, so long as
I be left in peace meself.

MRS. MASON.

That's all right then.

KENNITH (*rises*)

We'd better be going. I can't take any
photographs now.

RACHAEL (*going to the door.*)

I'll not hinder you then.

MRS. MASON

Well, I'm sure we're all very much obliged.
(*Moves up a step.*)

TISDALE

Very much indeed.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. MASON

We'd like to make you a little present, I'm
sure. (*RACHAEL up to door.*)

KENNITH (*goes to c.*)

This isn't a show place, mother.

MRS. MASON (*comes down a step*)

There's no harm in a little present.

KENNITH (*moves up*)

You don't want to offend her.

(*Crosses to table l. for bag, etc.*)

(*As they move towards the door ISAC
returns.*)

ISAC

I came back for me pipe.

RACHAEL

The company's just going, Isac.

ISAC (*going to the fireplace r.*)

Good-night. Good-night.

MRS. MASON (*goes up*)

Well, I'm sure we're all very much obliged.

(*She passes through the outer room
and the others follow.*)

MISS FENNER (*passing out*)

Very much.

PHOEBE (*passing out*)

We've so enjoyed it.

MISS BANKS (*passing out*)

Thank you so much. The post-box is outside,
isn't it?

ALL THAT MATTERS

RACHAEL

Yes, miss.

TISDALE (*passing out*)

Would you mind thanking Mr. Hyde. Give him Captain Tisdale's compliments.

TWIDLE (*passing out*)

Thank you.

KENNETH (*up L.C. passing out—to ISAC*)

If I'd taken a snapshot of you I'd have made a postcard of you and sent you one. We're very much obliged, you know. Good afternoon.

RACHAEL (*following them to close the outer door*)
Good afternoon, ladies. Good afternoon, gentlemen.

(*The outer door is heard closing. She comes back. RACHAEL closes door.*)

ISAC

The creatures is gone, then.

RACHAEL

Aye, they've gone. And much good may they have brought us, though they was a high class of visitor, so they said.

ISAC

For meself, I didn't feel comfortable to leave the place till I'd seen the back of 'em. (*Turns to fire.*) Have they been writing letters, to want to know where the post-box is?

ALL THAT MATTERS

RACHAEL (c.)

Aye, they wrote a bit of a letter. A bit of their nonsense. A letter to Mr. Pacy, reckoning to put it into his mind to marry Kimber's girl, Olive Kimber.

(Laughs, goes up to window, looks out.)

ISAC *(half choking himself)*

Reckoning to put it into Pacy's mind to marry Olive Kimber! You mewsing old faggot.

RACHAEL

What's the matter with you?

ISAC *(pause)*

Yer.

(He goes to the door below chair, picks up hat.)

RACHAEL

You can't do anything. 'Tis dropped in the box. *(ISAC turns back, irresolute.)*

ISAC

I never thought so little of you, Rachael.

RACHAEL

What does the letter matter?

ISAC *(considerably confused)*

It's an ugly thing. Isn't it an ugly thing? A young girl to be writ about like that. It's against the better feelings of anybody. . . . If you knew the girl.

(Up to door.)

RACHAEL *(comes down c.)*

What do you know of her, then?

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ISAC (*coming down*)

'Tis done, and we'd best hold our noise about it, I suppose.

RACHAEL

What do you know of the girl?

ISAC (*comes down c.*)

You'd best know it then. The girl's Mr. Allan's girl.

RACHAEL (*incredulous*)

Mr. Kimber's girl and Mr. Allan! *Our* Mr. Allan!

ISAC

You said you thought sometimes it was a woman. Well, it is. 'There's love between they two.

RACHAEL

Kimber's girl and Mr. Allan?

ISAC

Aye.

RACHAEL

You've found it out for yourself.

ISAC

I knows of it.

RACHAEL

You knows of it!

ISAC

That's what 'tis as be wrong with the man, though 'tis a thing with no evil in it. No evil. 'Tis just a love between 'em as 'as had every worldly thing agin it from

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the first. It's not the woman that's the trouble. It's the want of her.

RACHAEL

Are you talking of a new thing, or an old thing, or what is it?

ISAC

You'd name it an old thing, I suppose. It begun at the grammar school. 'Tis a thing as has growed on 'em.

RACHAEL

And you've knowed of it them years?

ISAC

'Twas no concern of mine to talk about.
(*Walks away from her to fire.*)

RACHAEL

Be you a bigger fool than even I could have thought you, then?

ISAC (*up to window*)

I daresay.

RACHAEL (c.)

Is it playing, and silliness between them, or is it more?

ISAC (*comes down L. of her*)

You'd not ask me that (*to L.C.*), if you'd seen them as I have. If you knew the girl at all. And you'd tear that letter out of the box there. 'Tis the love of angels between them, but the muck of mortal fingering—'tis like our girt

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fingers mauling a butterfly—it can't live against it.

(RACHAEL suddenly laughing with a hopeless cynicism.)

RACHAEL

For a girl! and he's lost it all for a chit of a half-grown girl to get the pleasure of his mooning eyes and his sighing voice on your hills. (ISAC over to her c.) And not even the pluck to take her—bolt with, marry her secret! and you talk of the love of angels with the poor cracked fool getting nothing!

ISAC

I've wished he might take her, often, because I'd wish any man to take his girl, when he could get her, when she's there and alive to be got. (RACHAEL laughs.) But you'll not laugh at them. If you laugh at them, you laugh at the sunshine and the wind and the growing flowers themselves.

RACHAEL

And now you think Pacy'll get her, and you're daft enough to stand there making your face grin savage at me at the thought of that! What's any of it to us? What's any of it all now? It's us that matters. Only us.

ISAC (over to L.C.)

I wish to God them fools had never come here.

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RACHAEL

'Tis for the good of all, I should say meself.

ISAC

The letter's nothing. But if you knew her, Rachael, you'd know the ugliness of it. A gentle girl like that and Pacy the man he is. It's not the danger, though there might be that even. Pacy's not blind to her, he's took to going to the Kimber's house, but it's not that. It's the thing. The ugliness of it.

RACHAEL

Get the letter from the box, then.

ISAC

No, no. 'Tis out of our hands and in the hands of Providence and the Government now. 'Tis a matter as 'as happened in the rotation of things, I suppose, but it goes agin me—(*Goes to table for hat ; RACHAEL up to window*)—I'll get to me sheep. Maybe I'll manage to have a word with him, for he'll be up there. 'Tis her arternoon for coming to him, and maybe I'll have a word, but 'tis hard to talk to un—very hard to talk to un.

RACHAEL (*looks off to R.*)

'They Cockneys yent got no farther than the yard, then. You'll have they laughing at you again, I suppose.

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ISAC

I'd like to set the dog at them.

RACHAEL

'Tis all right. One of the boys be pointing out the way to the caves now. You wait a minute.

ISAC (*at the door*)

They wunt get there, then, cos 'tis high tide.
But let they find that out for theirselves.

(*At this moment a cock crows outside, and there is instantly a shriek of laughter from the Londoners. ISAC looks back from the door.*)

Terrible funny to yer a cock crow, yen it?
(*He goes out.*)

Curtain.

SCENE 2.—*A sheep fold on Woolstone Downs.*

The top of a hill on the downs. To the right a rick of hay, with, under the shelter of it, a shepherd's hut. To the left a group of ragged wind-blown May trees. At the back, hurdles with the dip of the country beyond. About the ground are some wicker feeding troughs and a "crusher." Against the rick is a ladder, and imbedded in the hay a cutting-

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knife. There is a lowering sky with distant hills on the horizon. From beyond the hurdles there comes intermittently the bleating of sheep, with sheep-bells, and sometimes the rolling, thudding sound of numbers running.

ALLAN HYDE *is by the May trees, looking down the hills. Then ISAC comes to the hurdles from beyond and climbs stiffly over them; stopping and looking about him, and obviously uncomfortable.*

ISAC (*enters from L. at back, comes to c.*)

I thought I'd see that 'twas all to your satisfaction, master.

HYDE (*standing down R. turning to him impatiently*)

You needn't have come up here again, Isac.

ISAC.

I byent satisfied with the look of the weather. There'll be rain afore marning. The fine weather's done with.

HYDE (*looking back towards the hills*)

The wind's too high for much wet.

ISAC

The wind'll drop towards night. You see if it dwunt. I knew there was a change coming, six o'clock this marning. (*Gets over hurdle, comes down c.*)

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HYDE

All right, Isac.

(Moves down R.C.)

ISAC

There was two little messengers come across the hill there. Black little beggars they was, and they come low by thurselves. I says, "you mane rain," I says. And then come a proper cloud, a bit higher, and the wind rose, but when night comes the wind'll go back to where they messengers was sailing. I said to the beggars when I seed 'em, I said, "you might have waited till we'd got the medders cut," I said.

HYDE

It won't hurt the meadows to stand another week.

ISAC

Another week. I wouldn't like to say as 'twouldn't be another month. *(Turns away, then turns to HYDE; leaning on crook.)* And they might very well have been cut a fortnight ago, sir.

(HYDE moves away down R.C. The sheep bleat down the hill, and there is the dull thudding sound from the fold.)

Aye, they knows 'tis coming. Listen to 'em. Yer the fools jumping in the bottom. Yet *they* dwunt like rough weather any better'n you or I, master.

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HYDE

You'd better be getting down, Isac. (*Up to hurdle c.*) You shouldn't have come.

ISAC

I'd my great coat to fetch, anyway.
(*Gets on hut steps.*)

HYDE

. . . What do you make the time?

ISAC (*stopping short and taking out a great watch*)

Seventeen minutes past five, as near as might be. (*Comes down steps again to L.C.*) I set un this arternoon by Woolstone bells. That's another sure sign of rain, now, when 'e yers Woolstone bells as plain almost as if 'e wur in the town. I minds one night—

HYDE (*moves over to down L.C.*)

Look here, Isac, I want you to get off.

ISAC

I be going all right, sir, I be going. (*Comes down c. to HYDE.*) Only I wur just a thinking.

HYDE

What's the matter?

ISAC

I wur just a thinking as I dwunt know as I hadn't better cut 'em a bit of hay first. I dwunt like the look on't. Better gee 'em summat dry afore it comes on. (HYDE

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over to down R.) 'Tis no good a studying of ourselves, is it, sir? (*Over towards HYDE to R.C.*) I dwont know as I wunt cut 'em a bit.

(*Over to L.C.*)

HYDE

Not to-night I shouldn't. (*Over to c.*) It won't rain to-night, before they've done feeding, anyway. You'll be here first thing in the morning. (*Up R. down R.C.*)

ISAC (*at hut, turns to HYDE*)

How do I know I'll be alive at *all* in the morning? I dwunt hold with leaving things till the morning, not things as can be done very well at night. I'll cut 'em just a bit of hay, sir, and go on down then.

HYDE (*goes up to back c., coming back from the trees*)

There's the bottom rick if you want to cut them any.

ISAC (*goes up to back L.C.*)

Well, that's a question now, yen it, sir? Everything be a question. (*Indicates rick L.*) This yer be the sweetest, but t'other (*points off at back*) down bottom be the auldest. This yer be nighest whoam and t'other be nighest where I wants the sheep to lay. Very *well* then, 'tis me or me

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cattle. Now I was allus one to put the cattle afore meself.

HYDE

All right then, Isac, it's the bottom rick. And when you're down there I should go home the bottom way. Take your coat with you, and then there'll be no need for you to come back.

(Almost pushes ISAC to hut.)

ISAC *(hesitating)*

All right, sir. *(Moves to hut L.C., goes up steps.)*

HYDE

Good night. *(Crosses to R.)*

ISAC

Good night, sir. *(After going into the hut and reappearing with an. additional greatcoat on his shoulder.)* But I must fetch the cutter, mustn't I.

(He puts the coat down.)

HYDE

Haven't you a knife on the other rick?

ISAC *(comes down steps, going slowly towards the ladder L.)*

Er yent sharp, er yent, and I can't abide working with a blunt blade. *(HYDE moves over R. and up to back. He is steadying the ladder against the rick.)* Er wants the grindstun against him, that's what t'other wants. *(He climbs*

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slowly up the ladder and takes a "cutter" from out of the rick. While he is doing so he looks about the country. Then he takes a pull of hay from the rick and smells it.) 'Tis some sweet hay this, master. When I smells a bit of hay like this it allus puts I in mind of an old riddle, as I daresay you've heard I ax afore. 'Tis auld but 'tis true, and maybe I *ain't* never axed it of you. Now yer's my question, master—What's fatter than fat? What—be—fatter—than—fat?

HYDE (*half amused, coming under the rick, moves over to bottom of rick*)

Yes, I've heard it, Isac, and it's a very good riddle. The *land's* fatter than fat. I want you to get off.

ISAC

The *land* be fatter than fat, because fat comes off of it. (*He comes slowly down the ladder, grunting.*) The land be fatter than fat. (*Goes up L.C.*) The land be fatter than fat. (*While the old man is descending, HYDE walks to the trees R. ISAC goes up L.C. to hut, putting down the cutter and getting into the additional coat.*) I shan't cut 'em much, sir. Only enough to keep their bellies warm, but 'tis a pity they medders ain't made and done with, sir.

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HYDE (*from the trees*)

All right. (*Crosses to R.*)

ISAC (*picks up cutter. Pause. Very uncomfortably, over to C.*)

I'd have liked a *word* with you to-night if I could have it, sir.

HYDE

To-morrow, Isac. You know I' want you to go now.

ISAC (C.)

I'd have liked a word.

HYDE (*Pause. His arms behind back, takes a step forward, looks ISAC in eyes*)

The farm's gone, if that's what you want to ask me.

ISAC

I be sorry to hear that, sir.

HYDE

It's a week past quarter day. I've got another week's grace, making the usual fortnight, but it's impossible for me to do anything at all. I'm sorry. (*Crosses to R.*)

ISAC (*pause*)

So be I, sir. . . . And the little missy, sir, she'll be main sorry, wun her?

HYDE

She's coming, Isac. (*Over to ISAC.*) Get on down now, please, and to-morrow we'll talk about everything.

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ISAC

To-morrow. To-morrow.

(He begins to climb stiffly over the hurdles R.C.)

I holds, you knows, sir, as there byent no to-morrow,

(HYDE moves down R. Pause. [ISAC comes back a step)

and I'll tell 'e what Time be. 'Tis a changing of the weather, sir, that's all as Time be, and by that same token they medders should be cut and made, sir. For if 'e dwunt take fine weather when 'e's got it, 'tis gone, and that's all about it. *(Looking back over the hurdles.)* The weather, sir. Arter all, that's what matters. The weather, sir, the weather. *(He goes off to L., grunting the words to himself.)* The weather. . . the weather.

HYDE

Good-night, Isac.

(HYDE stands watching him for some moments.)

(The sheep are heard again, bleating down the hill. He comes back and goes impatiently to the trees. Then he goes into the hut, then to the trees again, and walks back at once to where

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he can watch ISAC descending the hill. The next moment OLIVE KIMBER comes through the trees to the left. She is slim and tall, dressed in a dark walking skirt, a grey blouse and a black hat; a quiet dress that becomes her half-womanly, half childlike and altogether bright and healthful appearance. She has light, rich hair, coiled rather low on her neck, a warm glowing looking face of delicate outline that is full of sensitive feeling, and grey eyes set in dark lashes. There is obviously a complete confidence between them. HYDE has come forward eagerly. They exchange at first a curiously commonplace "Hullo!"")

HYDE

Hullo!

OLIVE

Hullo!

HYDE

How are you?

OLIVE

How are you?

(*There is almost a touch of shyness, but*

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of an intimate sort—it is really respect—and they kiss one another.)

HYDE

I'm all right *now*. Two minutes ago I'd got every horrible complaint of the mind and body. Now I'm in the most perfect health that ever man was in. How are you?

OLIVE

I'm all right—quite. I saw Isac on the rick just now. (*Up to hurdle at back.*) He hurried off down.

HYDE

He's gone anyway. (*Moves up to R. of her at back.*) He's cutting some hay down in the bottom. He won't come back.

OLIVE (*looking over the hurdles to L.*)

He is a darling.

HYDE

Well now, Olive.

OLIVE

Doesn't he look just like an old acorn moving slowly along?

HYDE

Perhaps he does. Olive. (*He is waiting for her to go to him.*)

OLIVE (*turns to HYDE*)

I saw an old, old ploughman in his coffin once. He looked just like an acorn, too. (*Turns,*

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looks off L.) Dear old Isac. *(Pause.)*
Allan?

HYDE *(nearer to her)*

Darling?

OLIVE

Do you think it is going to rain?

HYDE

Do you want to talk about the weather now?
Now?

OLIVE *(moves down L.C.)*

Isn't it what farmers like talking about?

HYDE

Olive. *(Comes down to her.)*

OLIVE

I think it will rain. Presently.

HYDE

We needn't care if it does, need we? Olive,
come over here.

OLIVE *(breaks away up to back L.C., looks off L.)*

The sheep pretend that they don't care either.
Just look at them. There are two absurd
ones on the ridge, carefully measuring for
a great butt. I love to see the way the
one that has to walk backwards tries to
look dignified. Do look at him.

*(HYDE is obdurate, moves away down
R.C.)*

(Comes down L.C.) I wonder why that
should be a sign of rain for sheep to play
—and feel silly. . . I suppose that's their

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philosophy. Whenever anything miserable is going to happen they cheer themselves up. Human people make themselves miserable first, and then try and cheer up when it happens. Or, if we are going to have a very nice time we look forward to it and want to butt one another, and then when the time comes we're generally—depressed. Don't you think sheep have got heaps more sense than people have?

HYDE

More sense than some of us, yes. Olive, confound your old sheep.

OLIVE

I feel as if it were going to rain, too. I don't mean that I feel exactly like butting, but—

(She looks at him with that curious, half-searching, half-puzzled look, that only women, and only womanly-women, can give. A look that reveals out of the eyes the instincts and the intuition that gives woman her right to be called baffling and mysterious. As a man reads it, it is a look that seems to say in its momentary glance, "If you quite knew all that I feel about you! But you don't quite know me as I know you, and you never will.

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You mustn't, ever, because I love you, and it is best for you that you should never quite, quite know all about how we women love. But if you knew! If you knew!" On HYDE it has the inevitable effect. He is stirred with a strange hope. The look tells him that he is very near the knowledge of some profound truth. He goes to her, whispering in a note of mingled expostulation and yearning.)

HYDE

Olive. (*He tries to kiss her.*)

(OLIVE plays with him at once. She must drive him away from the brink of her well of knowledge that no man must ever peer into.)

OLIVE (*steps back*)

I shall butt you.

HYDE (*expostulating*)

Darling.

OLIVE

I know just what you have been doing to-day.

(*Crosses to down R.*)

(*He watches her, waiting, and she goes on.*)

You have been cutting mangel-wurzles.

HYDE

Don't, this afternoon, Olive.

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OLIVE (*picking up one*)

Very good sheep feed . . . And very good mangels.

HYDE (*standing helplessly back against the hurdles, and folding his arms*)

All right. (*Moves over L.C. then up to back.*)

OLIVE

But they are, Allan. Very good mangel-wurzles.

HYDE

It's quite true. They are. (*Comes down to c.*)
I shall start talking about them in a minute. Or else I shall ask you to go home. Do you want to talk nonsense about sheep and mangel-wurzles.

OLIVE

Nonsense! Sheep and mangel-wurzles nonsense, says the farmer.

HYDE

Very well.

OLIVE (*going with the mangel in her hands to the crusher*)

I'm going to crush *one*. Do you turn it that way, or this?

(*She crosses to L., drops the mangel into the machine and looks at HYDE, but he takes no notice.*)

Which do you?

HYDE

Either.

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OLIVE

It isn't either. (*She turns the handle.*) That way only bumps it about. (*She reverses the handle.*) I wonder they have never made one with a sort of a musical box inside. That isn't silly at all. Shepherds have sheep-bells for company; why shouldn't they have musical boxes in their mangel-crushers?

HYDE (*comes down c.*)

Wouldn't you rather go off home, Olive?

OLIVE

I must grind this one.

HYDE

I really think you'd better go, darling.

OLIVE

This one. (*She goes on grinding. Suddenly she leaves off and stares miserably, almost sullenly, down at the machine.*)

HYDE (*looking across at her*)

Go now, Olive (*to up L.C.*)

OLIVE (*pauses, half looking across at him*)
Allan!

HYDE

I want you to.

(*OLIVE suddenly goes to him, penitently.*)

OLIVE

Please . . . I want to tell you. (*A step to c.*)

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HYDE

Well, I don't want to hear anything. (*Over to her in front.*) After waiting like I've been waiting for you. I've never in my life wanted you like I've wanted you to-day. And you've thrown all the time away.

OLIVE

No, please.

HYDE

You've no judgment about your moods any of you women. (*Turns away up R.C.*) Anyway, you don't understand mine. Insisting on—Oh! I want you to go.

(He suddenly sees that she is looking at him through tears, and he springs to her, remorseful in a moment, but still a little irritable.)

(Crosses to her R.C., kisses her.)

All right, Olive.

OLIVE

I've wanted to come. . . . I've counted all the moments, only I want you to understand.

HYDE (*pause*)

What is it?

OLIVE (*suddenly laughing brightly—they move over to L.C.*)

It isn't anything. Only I'm just like it because ——

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HYDE

What?

(*Moves over to L.*)

OLIVE

I want to tell you something. (*Moving up to the hurdles.*) I want you to listen. I just want to tell you very nicely and quietly.

(*Sits c.*)

HYDE

Dearest.

OLIVE

Well . . . I love you.

HYDE (*sitting R. of her*)

I know you do. So do I you.

OLIVE

And last night I felt something so beautiful about it all. And I thought I could easily tell you, and now I find I can't properly, and it made me unkind, but I ought just to tell you. I ought to be able to tell you?

HYDE

Darling?

OLIVE

It isn't anything really. At least it *is*. A lot. But I want to tell you.

HYDE

It's just something you thought?

OLIVE

Yes.

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HYDE

Something that's actually had the effect of making you *shy*?

OLIVE

Yes.

HYDE

Well, I was thinking wonderful things last night (*rises, crosses to down L.*), and I've hardly known how to wait for you to come to tell you of them.

OLIVE

When was it—was it *in* the night?

HYDE

It was morning, really, and I made up my mind about something. I was up here. I've been up here a lot at nights lately. (*Crosses down L.C.*) I feel I can't go down into the house. You see, I've turned the hut round. That's so that I can lie in there and see across the hills through the door. (*Crosses down R.C.*) But last night it was hot. I couldn't even stay in the hut, and all night I was walking about here. Thinking of you, of course. (*Moves up to her.*) And I'm going to tell you that I made up my mind—

OLIVE (*quickly*)

Don't tell me anything. (*Takes his hand.*)
Let me tell you first. (*He sits R. of her.*)
I woke up, towards morning it was really, and I went and sat at the window, because

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I couldn't sleep. I had no light in my room, and it's a large window with a seat in it. It was very hot and the window was open, but the air blew against me cold when I got there, so I brought some blankets and wrapped them round me. It struck three just as I had made myself comfortable, curled up in the corner, and I thought I would watch the dawn break. Of course it was still night, but it was awfully light. The moon was shining through great clouds and the hills lay as if there was a heavy mist lying round them. And the moon just lit up the sea, too. The tide was up, and I could see it shining in the cove.

HYDE (*looks to back*)

The *sea*. Yes, it was wonderful from here last night. I watched the tide come in, though it's a mile away. Just by the moonlight.

OLIVE

It was the tide I thought about first of all, and what you said to me once about it. Do you remember, in our cave, when we went there and cut our names on the rock?

HYDE

When you promised me—

OLIVE

When I promised you——You said that when two people were going to marry it

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would be a good plan to go to the beach and watch the tide come in. The absolute way that Nature keeps her word. The sea and the rocks. It was absolute truth that the sea would come to his rocks, and people must love like that. If they couldn't feel just as certain about one another as the rocks must feel about the sea, then they ought to say good-bye.

HYDE

You are certain ?

OLIVE

Of course. But I remembered that. And then I went on thinking, and I thought such a lot about you. I just sat watching and thinking. All the time the great clouds were going across the moon, and the valley was lying so still and pale in the mists with the great tops of the hills sort of floating on them, and the air was so full of the smell of the earth. "The earth and the waters, and the waters under the earth." And then, presently, I realised, not suddenly, although it did seem to come all at once, it's so difficult to explain, but I realized that what I felt about you—what I felt about you—was——

HYDE

What, darling ?

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OLIVE (*slowly*)

Was exactly what the world looked like from my window.

HYDE (*whispering*)

Olive.

OLIVE

It was wonderful. I've felt that love was like the flowers and like all sorts of beautiful things, but last night it was so big, so wide, what I felt. The earth and the wind and the space. The great, beautiful calm and faith of it all. It was bigger than anything human. (*Turns to him.*) Oh, how wicked it is to speak of ashes and dust, when we are part of that great life out there. And sin and evil. Last night I knew that there was none. It was just Nature and God. I knew that Nature is love. Love is Nature. Nothing mattered. Only to be a part of that great, perfect whole. My soul seemed to swim out to it, to float with the clouds going by the moon, to blow with the wind against my own face. And an owl hooted, and it was part of my soul, and a corncrake screamed on the river, and I heard birds, and it was all part of me, and I was crying.

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HYDE (*he rises*)

Darling! (*He takes her in his arms.*)

OLIVE

It was almost terrible.

HYDE

Love is that. 'That's what love is. (*She looks up and kisses him. The effect on HYDE is to make him almost inarticulate in the supreme bliss of seeing his romance culminate on the heights of simple naturalness indicated by OLIVE's coming to him. Something of a self-tormentor, he has vaguely thought himself in a rather impossible dream all through his love-making with OLIVE. He tries deliberately to say very little.*) You've thought all this, Olive, and you've come and told me. . . . I'm going to take you straight at your word.

OLIVE

Yes.

HYDE

You'll be ready just when I ask you?

OLIVE

Yes, yes.

HYDE (*shuddering out the words*)

At last! It's all behind. . . . All our waiting.

OLIVE

It's gone quickly, really.

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HYDE

Quickly! (*Up to her again. He makes a curious movement of looking over his shoulder.*) A year ago we were up here—still waiting. And two, and three, and four, and five years ago. Waiting. You don't know the wreck I've become in the last few months of it.

OLIVE

Oh, I know. But we had to wait. We were sure. It was always certain.

HYDE

It's the last year that's been unbearable. You didn't know the state I was in about you. For months I've hated to go into the house. There's always that ironical motto there, staring me in the face—"Love and plenty and the woman's hand." All that matters! And the ghastly place shutting me out from everything. (*Laughs, crosses to R.C.*) So I've kept on the hills as much as I could—where I can think of you in some sort of peace. (*Pauses, goes up to her.*) But there's a thing I've got to tell you, Olive. The farm's gone. It's *gone*. I've *got* to leave here now.

OLIVE

I guessed that was happening. I knew it must be. They talked at home about it. . . .
Poor Allan!

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HYDE

And you've come to me! Last night I was walking here in distraction, bringing myself to making up my mind to ask this of you—and you've come yourself. . . . I used to be able to think like you were thinking from your window, but now I can only think of your face and wanting to put my arms round you. You're with me always, and now we'll watch the nights together. (*He breaks out.*) 'The farm! (*Moves away R.C.*) It was right it should go. I've wanted it to happen. I've waited for it.

OLIVE

You haven't *wanted* it too.

HYDE (*to c.*)

I've just waited for this wretched place to go, and leave me free.

OLIVE

But Allan—

HYDE

I've just waited! In fact I've kicked the place down the hill a little, by sheer, deliberate neglect. Just the first year or two, when I couldn't have taken you away, when I knew we *had* to wait, I played at keeping the place together, and at taking a sort of interest in it, but even then, and I was a

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boy then, I only thought of it as a place where I could stay and wait near you. Then we both got older and the facts came along. The bald fact that I'd got nothing here at all, and I saw the place in the light of a sheer nuisance. Yet, while it lasted, I *had* to stick here. That sentimental tradition—the last of the Hydes! I wanted it to leave *me*. I didn't want to leave *it*. *I've let it drift, (Moves down R.C.)* and its gone to pieces at the right moment.

OLIVE

What are you saying?

HYDE (*up to her*)

I'm saying that the farm has kept me near you, and that's all it was ever fit for. And it's given me a hill like this where I could dream of you while I waited.

OLIVE (*she steps back L.*)

You don't know what you are saying.

HYDE

You trust what you felt, don't you?

OLIVE

I trusted it till you talked like this. Until you told me what you have. You have told me that *because* of me you have lost everything. You've told me that I've

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been very bad for you. (*Pause.*) You don't know what you have said to me.

(*Turns away L.C.*)

HYDE

I've simply told you—

OLIVE (*turns*)

Allan, I must know. Do you *mean* that you have only thought and cared about *me*? That because of me you have deliberately let yourself lose something that I know you wanted to keep—

HYDE (*down to her*)

What?

OLIVE

Your home. (*HYDE moves down R.C.*) When I thought it *had* to go I was only sorry. But if it was because of me. Not because you *couldn't* succeed, but just because of me. Oh, I couldn't—

HYDE

But I don't care about the home.

OLIVE

That isn't true. You wanted to succeed here. When your father died . . .

HYDE (*a step towards her*)

When my father died I was like any other ordinary boy might have been; but it proved impossible, anyway, to go on taking any interest in it. And when I talked to you up here that first morning

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after they had *called* me home, I saw *then* that it was my opportunity of keeping near you. When I went through that Exam. that took me away in the first place, I could have kicked myself to a jelly then. (*A step away.*) I never made the faintest effort to pass the blessed thing. . . . (*Goes to her.*) I've always been like it, Olive.

OLIVE

Then I've always been bad for you.

HYDE

To hear you say that!

OLIVE

I thought of you just as troubled and worried, fighting against something that was so hard, and I was so sorry. I often wanted to talk to you of it all, but it seemed cruel. I wanted you to forget it for a little while, and all the time you weren't worried. You were just waiting to ask me to come to you when at last you were forced to go from here.

HYDE

You're hitting me as hard as you know how, Olive.

OLIVE

I wanted our love to be just for itself. I thought it was. Oh, I hate to have to do

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even little things, but the biggest—the most wonderful of all—

HYDE

Olive, I know myself, and I know what I can do if I've only got *you* with me. The great thing that I had to wait for was your being old enough, old enough to come to me. I want a *new* life, and only you can give it me. The place here reeks of generations of debt and want. It isn't farming that I hate, but I hate this place. I want new soil. Clean soil that I can — start on somewhere like a clean slate. I know it will need money, but I'll get it, I tell you. I shall be invincible if I've got you with me. I need your help, Olive. I've always needed it.

OLIVE

You call that help? You really think you can come to me—I—who am supposed to love you—and talk like this. You have practically said to me, "I have thought so much of you that for years I have deliberately ruined myself, because I have made up my mind that I can't do anything without you." If I'll come to you, you'll do something. But you, have no strength of your own. Allan, I don't love like that. If I died—if you lost me, I should know that I was leaving you to be like it all over again.

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HYDE

If I lost you now, Olive, I should have made a pretty big failure, I can tell you.

OLIVE (*very tenderly*)

I want you—my husband—to be stronger than I am, not weaker. (*The tenderness changes almost to scorn.*) It is simply humiliation for both of us, what you have told me. I shouldn't have been afraid of poverty, of starving with you—if we just had to starve—but what you have said makes everything impossible.

HYDE

Olive!

OLIVE

Allan, it won't come right now, unless—

HYDE

What?

OLIVE

Unless you do something now—without me—quite without me.

ALLAN

Do something here without you? There's nothing I can, and there's nothing I would if I could.

OLIVE

There's the farm, even now. Couldn't you try even yet to do something—or something else that would be your own work, your

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own life. Your life, Allan, that I could—just—come—into.

HYDE

I wouldn't if I could. I have acted as I have because I have simply wanted you. (*Closer to her.*) Because you were all that mattered to me. If you mean this seriously I offer *no* compromise. I simply want *you*. I refuse to make a fool of myself struggling to make money here to get you to even come and *speak* to me. I've some self-respect. (*Over to c.*) Let the whole place rot where it stands. You can help me if you will—my way—if you won't—

OLIVE

If I won't, you will forget me altogether? (*She waits, but he does not answer.*) Then you must. If you won't forget me, like I ask, for a little while. Had you better forget me altogether?

HYDE (*looks at audience*)

Well, I'd do my best.

OLIVE

It will be best like that, then.

HYDE

Olive, you don't mean it. (*Over to her.*)
What on earth has happened?

ALL THAT MATTERS

OLIVE

I don't want to stay any longer. (*Crosses to R.C.*) It can't do any good, and you won't understand.

HYDE (*follows her over*)

You really came here to pick a quarrel with me! Coming as you said, and then—!

OLIVE

I want to leave you like I have asked. It is all I have asked.

HYDE (*mocking*)

All.

OLIVE

Yes—all.

HYDE (*up to her*)

Do you mean it?

OLIVE

Yes, Allan.

HYDE

Olive—don't.

(*Takes her hand.*)

OLIVE

Good-bye, to-night anyway.

(*Is going.*)

HYDE (*stopping her ; pauses R. of her ; she steps back*)

There's one obvious explanation, isn't there?

You've found someone who answers better than I do to this new ideal-of-a-successful man. A simple explanation, after all!

OLIVE

Don't talk like that, please, Allan.

ALL THAT MATTERS

HYDE

It's bred in you to admire money. . . . I
forgive you, if it's true.

OLIVE (*expressionlessly*)

Good-bye.

HYDE (*stopping her*)

Pacy! (*Pause.*) Is it Pacy? (*Pause.*)
That's why he's made friends with your
father and comes to your house, is it?
Really, Olive! I had thought of some-
thing like this happening, but as I respected
you I didn't go any farther than hating
myself for a piece of blasphemy. Olive,
have you really begun to like him?

OLIVE

Please, I wish to go. (*Tries to go.*)

HYDE (*in front of her.*)

Well, good Heavens! Henry Pacy! Well,
you couldn't very well like both of us,
could you? I rather admire your decision,
after all. If you want a change, you had
better get a complete one. (*Over to l.c.*)
I don't think he'll put you in mind of me
very often.

OLIVE (c.)

I shall not forgive any of this.

HYDE (*quickly*)

You musn't. You must do the thing *properly*.
As long as he doesn't make himself too
cheap, you'll get on all right,—won't you?

ALL THAT MATTERS

OLIVE

Good-bye. (*Crosses in front of him to down R.*)
(*She passes to the trees. He watches her, then suddenly goes after her.*)

HYDE

Olive (*goes down towards her, catches her arm*),
I mean it, if you do. It's good-bye for good.

OLIVE

Please. (*She disappears down R.*)
(*HYDE stands staring after her by the trees. ISAC comes to the hurdles.*)

ISAC

I say, sir.

HYDE (*crosses to L., swinging round, unnerved and infuriated*)

What the devil do you want?

(*Paces up and down L.*)

ISAC

I thought p'r'aps I'd better tell 'e, sir. There's some of they holiday-makers coming up from the bottom. I've run the breath fair out of me, scrambling up the hill to get here fust.

HYDE (*savagely*)

Why don't you go home? I don't mind who comes here. (*Crosses to down R.*)

ISAC

Well, I thought p'r'aps, sir—but I ax your pardon, I'm sure.

ALL THAT MATTERS

HYDE (*from the trees R.*)

All right.

ISAC (*climbing the hurdles*)

Be missy gone, sir?

HYDE (*crosses to L., going and slamming the door of the hut*)

Yes.

ISAC

I be sorry to hear that.

HYDE

Thanks.

(*Comes down L., then up L.*)

ISAC

'Tis as well, no doubt, with they a'cooming up the hill, but if in a manner of speaking, sir—

HYDE

All right.

(*Crosses to R.*)

ISAC (*very uncomfortably*)

P'r'aps you'll take an old feller's advice, sir, and remember as arter all 'tis the weather as counts most at a time like this. (*Comes down to HYDE a few steps.*) Women be p'r'aps best coming arter more serious things, sir.

HYDE (*turns to ISAC*)

I think you're right. We'll be on the meadows first thing to-morrow morning if the rain holds off. (*Up L.C. to back L.C.*)

ISAC

On the medders! (*Delighted.*)

ALL THAT MATTERS

HYDE

Yes. *(Moves up L.C. a step.)*

ISAC

Well, then, I dwunt know as the rain wunt hold off, sir. I dwunt know as I ain't changed me mind about it.

HYDE *(crosses to R.)*

I'm coming to *(rapidly)* your way of thinking, Isac. The farm hasn't quite gone yet. *(R. of ISAC, bitterly.)* Perhaps I'll show some of the dogs about here that I can be as sane as they, if I've nothing more to live for than they have.

ISAC

Yer byent taking a thing like this too serious, I hope, sir. You couldn't quarrel for long, yer know. Not you two couldn't.

HYDE

You've always told me that the weather matters, Isac. *All* right, I'll take you at your word. Good night. I want sleep—sleep. I'll be in bed at nine to-night like any other honest fool.

(He goes off down L.)

ISAC *(following him off over to hill)*

But one word, sir. I'd like to tell 'e just one thing, sir. Dwunt lose your opinion of women altogether *(picks up sack)*, for there's something to be said for them, and

ALL THAT MATTERS

what I says myself is this, that they be
half terrors and half wonders. Mainly
wonders. *(He goes off L.)*

Curtain.

ACT II.

The drawing-room at the KIMBER's farm, near Woolstone. A long, low, green-papered room with white wood-work. A window to the left. At the back a glass door leading out into a garden. Doors at the back of the walls right and left; to the right the fireplace. There is an attempt at a green harmony throughout the room, set off by gilded picture frames and much brass work. The arrangement of the furniture is a piano to the right of the glass door, a sofa forward to the right, and to the left a secretaire. A plush upholstered chair near the fireplace and certain Sheraton chairs about the room. The fireplace is decorated with green shavings for the summer, and, the window being a little open, a short silk curtain is blowing into the room; a slanting beam of sunlight entering at the window.

The chair at the secretaire is turned towards the room and occupied by MR. JAMES GILL, a stout and heavy Scotchman with a rough red beard that appears to be cut with scissors close to his red face, and the hair of his round scalp very thin and short. He is well over fifty and is slow of movement and speech, his breath being rather short. He

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is dressed in a suit of fawn-coloured riding tweed with cloth gaiters, and carries a brown box hat.

A very young SERVANT GIRL of not more than fifteen years, dressed in a clean blue print dress, with short skirts, but with her hair done up under a white cap, opens window first, then goes to piano and removes sheet, folding it up.

GILL

You know Mr. Kimber is expecting me?

GIRL

Yes, Mr. Gill.

GILL (*looking at his watch*)

It's past nine.

GIRL

Yes, sir.

GILL (*putting up his watch*)

Um. I suppose you don't know where he went?

GIRL

I expect *he* went up the fields, sir. (*Crosses to piano, takes off sheet.*)

GILL

Did he have his gun?

GIRL

He always has his gun when he goes up the fields, sir.

GILL

You know he's expecting me?

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GIRL

I know he had your note last night, sir.
(*Comes down c. folding sheet.*)

GILL

Miss Olive about anywhere?

GIRL

I expect she is, sir. She doesn't go to Woolstone, not on Saturdays, sir.

(*OLIVE comes in at the left, goes to R. of table. She pauses on seeing GILL. Exit servant R. in front of OLIVE.*)

GILL (*rises*)

Good morning, Miss Olive.

(*Goes quickly to L. of table.*)

OLIVE

Good morning, Mr. Gill.

GILL

Did you know I was here?

OLIVE (*R. of table*)

I've not seen father. I was late at breakfast this morning. Have you come to see him?

GILL

I wrote and said I'd be here at nine. I've got to be in at Woolstone at ten to see his lordship. Involves work to be Lord Latham's agent.

OLIVE

No doubt.

ALL THAT MATTERS

GILL

The girl says your father *knows* I'm here.

OLIVE (*at R. of table*)

He's gone up the fields, I expect. He has to pick out some sheep, I think, this morning. It's Letcombe sheep fair, isn't it?

GILL

Yes, I expect we'll be going on together. Does your mother know I'm here?

OLIVE

I'll see. (*She turns back to the door to R.*)

GILL

It doesn't matter. I want to ask you something. Are you fond of riding in a motor-car?

OLIVE

I never have. (*A step c. to below table.*)
Except in the Great Western motor-bus.

GILL

Mr. Pacy's coming over in his at half-past nine.

OLIVE

Is he?

GILL

I think he's going to propose driving your father over to Letcombe. Would you like to go?

OLIVE

Oh no, thank you. . . . Father never likes anyone to go to market with him. (*Crosses*)

ALL THAT MATTERS

below table to piano.) I mean, not my mother or myself. He only goes to buy sheep.

GILL

Doesn't matter. Mr. Pacy'll look after you. Get your mother to go, and go along with them. It'll do you good.

OLIVE

I don't think I will, thank you. (*Pause.*)

GILL (*a step forward*)

You're growing a fine big girl, Miss Olive. You've grown out of all knowledge of when I first saw you. I can remember when you were so high, and now you're bigger than I am. Eh?

OLIVE (*uncomfortably*)

Yes, I've grown.

GILL (*to her*)

You were a bonnie girl. I used to call you me wee Scotch lassie. You used to sing "Highland Laddie," didn't you? You'd got a Scotch plaintiveness about you always, Miss Olive. Bobbie Burns used to say, let a Scotch lass as much as think of a heart ache, and the tears 'll gang to her eyes. You'd got that same plaintive look in you when you was a little lass.

OLIVE

What do you mean?

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GILL

You put me in mind of Aberdeenshire whenever I look at you.

OLIVE

I'm sure that's a compliment.

GILL (*takes out watch*)

Your father's a long time.

OLIVE

I don't know whether the sheep were penned or not. (*Crosses below table to window.*) If they weren't it'll take them a little time to get them together.

GILL (*to chair by table R.C.*)

You know Mr. Pacy pretty *well* now, don't you?

OLIVE

Yes, I've *met* him here.

GILL

A fine straight man. I wish there were more like him.

OLIVE

Yes?

GILL

He'd like to take you. I should go. Hullo!

(*Mrs. KIMBER comes in at the door to the R., shuts door. She is a woman of nearly fifty, with a weak voice, dressed in a quaintly elaborate costume of brown. Her treatment of GILL is painfully*

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deferential, but there seems no attempt to extend this studied mannerism to OLIVE, and she alternates with a pleasant simplicity between her treatment of GILL as somebody who must be impressed by every word, and OLIVE as a boor about to disgrace her.)

GILL (*crosses below table to Mrs. KIMBER*)
Good morning, Mrs. Kimber. Did you know I was here?

(OLIVE moves over to glass door.)

MRS. KIMBER (*to R. of GILL*). (*Smiling whenever she speaks to him*)

Good morning. Yes, I knew. Mr. Kimber told me when he had your note last evening. I'm sorry he's late.

GILL

As long as you all know.

MRS. KIMBER

Quite a nice air this morning (*sees books on table, crosses to c*), isn't there? Olive, don't put your books on the table.

(OLIVE picks up books, puts them on piano.)

Did you drive over? But of course you did. (*Crosses down to behind sofa, tidies it.*)
Olive, where is your father?

(GILL to R. of table, sits.)

ALL THAT MATTERS

OLIVE

I haven't seen him, mother; but I think last night he said he would have to pick out some sheep.

MRS. KIMBER (*at sofa, tidies it*)

Oh yes, it's Letcombe sheep market, isn't it? I think I heard him say so. Fancy, the window (*up to L. of table to window*) being open like that. All that dust from the ricks.

(*She closes the window—OLIVE to behind sofa, sits arm. Crosses down to L. of table.*)

I don't know what Maud could be thinking about. A stupid girl about a house. She doesn't know what matters and what doesn't.

GILL

Do you like riding in a motor car, Mrs. Kimber?

MRS. KIMBER

I like the Great Western motor-bus very well indeed. I go in that sometimes, but not often, of course. I don't go away from here very much. The butter ties me.

GILL (*rises*)

Why not go into Letcombe with Mr. Pacy this morning? He's coming over in his car to see Kimber.

MRS. KIMBER (*flattered*)

Oh, Mr. Pacy, is he?

ALL THAT MATTERS

GILL

He's going to run Mr. Kimber over to Letcombe if he cares to go. Why not run with him? You and Miss Olive?

MRS. KIMBER

I don't know about Olive.

OLIVE (*rises*)

I really couldn't.

(*Moves up to R. of glass door.*)

GILL

Well, wait and see what Kimber has to say.
(*Moves down a step, turns.*) I must be away before ten. I have to see his Lordship. . . . Ah, I can see Kimber.

OLIVE (*looking through the glass door*)

Yes, he's coming now. (*She goes to unbolt the fastening of the door c.*) I'll call him.

MRS. KIMBER

He can't come into the drawing room through that door, Olive. What are you thinking about? Don't be silly.

(*KIMBER comes to the glass of the door.*)

KIMBER (*from outside*)

Hullo, Gill.

MRS. KIMBER

You don't want to come this way, Stanley, with your boots like that.

KIMBER

Sha'n't be a minute. (*He goes off to R.*)

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OLIVE (*opening the doors*)

We'll have a little air, mother.

MRS. KIMBER.

We don't want more air. (*To door.*) The window's been open. (*She shuts the door and looks back simpering at GILL. To L. of table.*) Mr. Kimber won't be a minute, but he does come in so rough from the fields. It's a trouble to get him to think about things. If you'll excuse me a moment.

(*Crosses below table. She goes out R.*)

A little air won't hurt us, will it?

(*She opens the door and sways it like a fan for a few moments and then closes it again.*)

GILL

Your mother's rather an indoor bird, isn't she?

(*The door to the left opens and KIMBER enters, going across to GILL. He is a hard, keen-faced man of fifty with a tanned face and ragged brown moustache that scarcely conceals what is called a cruel mouth. He appears hot and irritable, but he carries off his irritability with a certain touch of humorousness that goes a long way towards preventing him from seeming actively ill-mannered. Apparently he cares*

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little for dress, wearing a shabby, almost ragged black coat and waistcoat, but he has taken off his boots, so that he is in riding breeches and grey worsted stockings. On his head is a shapeless looking bowler hat, which he throws on to the sofa. His hair is thin, and streaked down his forehead with perspiration, and his hands are particularly tanned.)

(MRS. KIMBER follows him in with a pair of large leather slippers. He sits down on the plush chair, and while he is talking puts on the slippers, and MRS. KIMBER takes the hat from the sofa, simpering ashamedly.)

KIMBER *(enters R., after shaking hands before going to the chair)*

I got your note all right. I had to go up the fields though. Sorry, if I kept you waiting.

(Crosses to arm L, puts hat on sofa.)

(MRS. KIMBER simperingly turns the antimacassar behind him.)

GILL

I came the only chance I'd got to see you this morning.

KIMBER

Well, what's up.

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MRS. KIMBER

I've never known you so rough-looking as you are this morning, Stanley. And Mr. Pacy's coming. You ought to change, you know, when you come in.

(Picks up hat, moves to up c.)

GILL

Oh, Mr. Kimber's always himself now, Mrs. Kimber.

KIMBER

Mr. Pacy coming over here?

GILL

Yes, I think he wants a word with you. *(A step forward.)* He spoke about driving you on to Letcombe in the car, if you'd let him.

MRS. KIMBER *(crosses to L. of table c.)*

It's very kind of him, I'm sure.

KIMBER (R.)

Some business in the air, is there? I can guess what it's about. *(Rises.)* All right. Give me five minutes.

(He strides off towards the door R.)

MRS. KIMBER

You'll want some hot water, Stanley.

KIMBER *(over below table to R.C.)*

I'm shaved all right. *(Then to GILL.)* What time's he coming?

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GILL

Half-past nine. But I want a word with you
myself. (*Comes down to armchair.*)

KIMBER

I'll be under ten minutes.

MRS. KIMBER

Stanley! (*Holds his hat—he takes it.*)
(*He goes off R.*)

MRS. KIMBER (*simpering*)

I can't get Mr. Kimber to think of appearances as he ought. (*Gets to L. of table.*)
He won't be many minutes, though, as he is shaved. . . . You'll sit down, won't you?

GILL (*going back to his chair*)

Thank you. (*Moves up; sits L. of table.* OLIVE
stands near the glass door.)

MRS. KIMBER

It's early for Mr. Pacy to be about, isn't it?
(*To R. of table, sits.*)

GILL

He's an early riser. I've been with him already this morning. I slept at the Headland House last night. It was his dog-cart drove me over.

MRS. KIMBER

Oh, yes.

GILL

There's some business on foot. Mrs. Kimber.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. KIMBER

I suppose it's to do with young Allan Hyde's farm. He's leaving there at last, isn't he?

GILL

Didn't Mr. Kimber get a message from him yesterday afternoon. (OLIVE *listens.*)

MRS. KIMBER

We don't have an afternoon post here.

GILL

Oh, no. But hasn't he had a word from him at all this morning.

MRS. KIMBER

He hasn't seen his letters yet. He will now, though.

GILL

I expect he'll have heard, then.

MRS. KIMBER

Is it something to do with the tenancy?

(OLIVE *is having difficulties with herself, trying to appear indifferent.*)

GILL

Yes, it is. I thought the man would be obliged to be giving up next week (OLIVE *rises from piano stool*), but he did a puzzling sort of a thing yesterday. (*Rises.*)

OLIVE (*comes over to c., involuntarily*)

Mr. Hyde.

GILL

He's paid his rent, and he can stay on.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. KIMBER

Mr. Hyde?

MRS. KIMBER

He couldn't! He's got nothing!

(OLIVE *smiles down* L. *behind sofa.*)

GILL

He's got something, Mrs. Kimber, that I don't think we've credited him sufficiently with. He's got a smart business headpiece on him when he cares to use it. The boy's surprised me. He seems to have woke up of a sudden. Ah, he's canny.

(*Looks at OLIVE.*)

MRS. KIMBER (*rises*)

Where could he get the money to pay you?

GILL

He's fetched a dealer up from somewhere or other and got a price for his stock. He can't have anything left up there, but he's raised money. (*Sits* L. *of table.*) Came and paid me off and went away laughing. Said he'd run the lease out for fifty years yet. (*Pause.*)

MRS. KIMBER

But could he do that? (*Sits* R. *of table.*)
Could he sell things like that?

GILL

It's what hundreds of men could do when they're in a hole (*smacks table*), but they never see it. Rather wait for somebody else to come and sell the things for them.

ALL THAT MATTERS

It takes a quick clear brain though, and a good deal of courage. You'll see what he's at, though, when Mr. Kimber comes down.

MRS. KIMBER (*looks at OLIVE*)

I can't think why he tries to go on with the place instead of giving it up to others. He can't work it. It's quite obvious he can't work it.

OLIVE

I'm going (*moving up L. as she speaks*) into the garden, mother.

(*She goes out abruptly door at back, hardly able to conceal her excitement.*)

MRS. KIMBER

It was from the first. He's starving there, when others might be making a proper use of the place.

GILL

He's not starving just for the moment, anyway; but we'll see when Mr. Kimber comes down.

MRS. KIMBER

I don't know why Olive went off like that. (*Looks round.*) She's got so abrupt.

GILL

A fine girl she's grown, Mrs. Kimber. There's not a finer-looking girl in the county.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. KIMBER

Oh, I don't know about that. She's a lot of ways I don't like. I put a lot down to that school. They pick up things that are not altogether nice. She's very head-strong about a lot of things, and I *wish* she'd got more style about her. She's too quiet. She doesn't make the friends she ought. She's too wrapt in herself.

GILL

A nice womanly girl. She's no' spoilt.

MRS. KIMBER

She's a very good girl when she wants to be ; but that school did her no good, I mean as a child. She's a lot to learn yet. I don't like her style. I like a girl to be smarter than that. I'm afraid she's not a girl people would take to. She's not all I should like her to be ; but she'll grow out of a great deal of it, no doubt.

GILL (*rises, leans over table*)

She'll be finding a husband to take to her before long. You see if she don't.

MRS. KIMBER

What, Olive ? Oh, no. (*Laughs.*) I don't think she's a girl to attract at all.

GILL

You may alter that opinion (*crosses over to end of sofa*) before very long, Mrs. Kimber.

(KIMBER comes in abruptly with a

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letter in his hand by the door at the left. He is dressed in a new tweed suit of brown, with brown boots, a clean collar and khaki tie.)

KIMBER (*turns at door—scowls at imaginary dog, then crosses to c. to GILL*)

What's this infernal dodge of young Hyde's?
Is that what you come to see me about?
. . . Is it right he owes you nothing and
can go on?

GILL

It's right enough.

KIMBER

I thought you told me you'd sell him out next week. I was buying lambs at Letcombe to-day to stock the place with. He tells me here I can have the place by buying him out. He'll give his lease up to whoever bids him the highest compensation. What does that mean? Has he offered it to Pacy?

GILL

Ay, he's offered it to Pacy.

KIMBER

I've got the option on his place. I've always had it.

MRS. KIMBER (*rises*)

Certainly you have, Stanley.

ALL THAT MATTERS

KIMBER

Hold your tongue.

GILL

You've got an option if I put him out. If he goes himself, he can make his own terms and I'll be glad enough to release him.

(Sits sofa.)

KIMBER (c.)

I've got your agreement—different to that.

GILL

It's in me pocket. We'll see how it reads.
(Puts spectacles on.) (He takes out a letter from his pocket and reads aloud.)

"In the event of Mr. Allan Hyde losing by default the tenancy he enjoys of the Manor Farm, it is agreed that Mr. Stanley Kimber shall have the first option of purchase at a price not exceeding that of valuation." In *default*, you see—well, he's not in default. He owes me nothing, and he's doing it of his free will. That's a lot of difference now. *(Rises.)* Now I'll tell you. He's a tenant I want to get quit of. His lordship wants to sell the property, and I welcome the opportunity. I shan't stand in the way of it at all.

(Sits sofa.)

MRS. KIMBER

It's not right, it's not fair at all. There's no doubt it could be upset.

ALL THAT MATTERS

KIMBER

Hold your tongue. (*Gives her a newspaper in a postal wrapper.*) Look at your newspaper or something.

GILL

Let's hear what he's written to you.

MRS. KIMBER

There's no doubt at all it could be upset.

GILL

You've got his letter?

KIMBER (c.)

Half-a-dozen lines of sauce. That's what it is.

"Dear Sir,"—

(*OLIVE comes to the door with some flowers. With the door just open she pauses. Her face is glowing with happiness. KIMBER just looks up and resumes.*)

"Sir, Although it lays with me to run my lease out here as long as I choose, my principal wish happens to be to escape from a place where I have not found a single neighbour fit for me to make an acquaintance of. I am, therefore, prepared to surrender my lease to whoever bids me the highest compensation. I believe there will be no difficulty in arranging the matter with Mr. Gill. Yours faithfully—Allan Hyde."

(*OLIVE almost dropping her flowers on a chair near the door goes from the room.*)

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. KIMBER (*pause*)

The man's mad.

GILL (*rubbing his hands*)

I never thought it was in him, you know. He's canny.

MRS. KIMBER

Fit for *him* to make an acquaintance of. He's like a labourer.

KIMBER

All right.

GILL

He's got a pedigree, you know, Mrs. Kimber.

MRS. KIMBER

I don't believe it. I can't think the Hydes ever *were* anybody.

(*Moves up to door c., picks up flowers.*)

GILL

Well, there's the position, anyway.

KIMBER (*turns*)

And you mean my option amounts to nothing.

GILL

It doesn't apply here. That's all.

MRS. KIMBER

It's not right, Stanley. (*Over to table L. of it.*)

GILL

I shan't stand in the way of the matter at all.

Pacy will be after it, but you must fight it out between you.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. KIMBER (*crosses above sofa*)
There's no doubt it could be upset. (*Down L. to L.*) There's no doubt of that at all.

GILL
You must fight it out between you—if it's necessary to fight.

KIMBER
How do you mean—if it's necessary?

MRS. KIMBER
It's not right at all.
(*Crosses up L. to piano up L.*)

KIMBER (*still to GILL*)
How do you mean?

GILL (*rises slowly*)
Why don't you come to some sort of arrangement?

KIMBER
What sort of arrangement?

GILL
Well, there are arrangements, you know.

MRS. KIMBER
It's not fair, Stanley. (*To up c.*)

KIMBER
Will you hold your tongue?

GILL
I'd rather Mr. Kimber listened. . . . Do you know Mr. Pacy is fond of your daughter. . . . of Miss Olive. . . . Have you ever guessed that?

ALL THAT MATTERS

KIMBER

Mr. Pacy. (*Pause.*)

MRS. KIMBER (*putting down her paper,
comes down c.*)

Fond of Olive?

KIMBER

Don't talk damn nonsense. (*Moves down R.*)

GILL

Perhaps the man'll talk damned nonsense for himself, then. I'm willing to talk to you if you'll listen.

MRS. KIMBER

Mr. Pacy fond of Olive?

KIMBER

Silly talk. (*Moves up R.*)

MRS. KIMBER

I don't know why you should say that, Stanley. But he doesn't know her. He's only spoken to her a few times—unless——

KIMBER

Unless what? (*Comes back to c.*) The girl'd speak to nobody without our knowing. What do you mean?

GILL (*Crosses to c. Puts hand on KIMBER.*)

MRS. KIMBER (*to below sofa*)

Mr. Pacy told me last night that Miss Kimber would make him a wife he'd be proud to have. (*Looks at MRS. KIMBER.*) Now I've told you what I know.

ALL THAT MATTERS

KIMBER

Mr. Pacy!

MRS. KIMBER

It's very surprising! (*Sits sofa.*)

(KIMBER gets chair from table, puts it
head of sofa, sits.)

GILL

He'll mention it to you himself before long, if I'm not mistaken. He's spoken to me often of the girl. The first time he came here he spoke of her. He asked me how long I'd known her, and I told him from a child. I said she was as good as she looked. He's been here several times since that first day he called. A couple of months ago, I suppose.

KIMBER

Yes.

MRS. KIMBER

Yes, certainly.

GILL (*to Mrs. KIMBER*)

You've noticed he's come after five o'clock?
Or else it's been on a Saturday.

(*Looks at KIMBER.*)

MRS. KIMBER

Yes, it's been like that.

(KIMBER crosses at back to c.)

GILL (*cunningly to Mrs. KIMBER*)

Isn't Miss Olive generally at home then?

MRS. KIMBER (*looking at her husband*)

There's no doubt he's been very nice to her.

ALL THAT MATTERS

GILL

He's taken a very great interest in her, Mrs. Kimber, enough interest to speak to me more than once about her school at Woolstone.

MRS. KIMBER

Really ?

GILL

You can tell from this that his interest is no light matter. He spoke of the boys and girls being taught together there, and, I think rightly, called it a rotten system, and he wondered it was allowed in England. (*Looks at KIMBER.*)

MRS. KIMBER

I never liked her going there.

KIMBER (*cross to R.C.*)

The school's all right.

GILL

He said it was a credit to her to have gone through her girlhood mixed up with boys like that and to have remained the gentle creature she is.

MRS. KIMBER

I *told* you it was never a nice idea, Stanley.

GILL (*to MRS. KIMBER*)

He said he never passed the place now without noticing what was going on. You know

ALL THAT MATTERS

how you see them. Big boys and girls going in at the same entrance.

(KIMBER *up to back R. then down, then up.*)

MRS. KIMBER

They ought at least to have separate entrances, if they mixed inside. It would look nicer.

GILL

However, I told him as far as Miss Olive went, she only taught a class of infants, and you could see he was glad when he heard it.

KIMBER

What does all this amount to?

(*Comes down to c.*)

GILL (*rises, up to KIMBER, puts hand on shoulder*)
It amounts to this, that when a gentleman of Mr. Pacy's position cares as much as that what a young woman is doing, his caring means something. It's my experience.

KIMBER

Now I'll tell you what I've got to say to this. Mr. Pacy is what you call a gentleman. Well then, I'm afraid of his taking an interest in my girl.

MRS. KIMBER

That's nonsense.

(*Rises.*)

GILL (*crosses*)

It might not be, Mrs. Kimber, if Mr. Pacy wasn't serious about it. You'll find he is if the girl fancies Mr. Pacy at all.

ALL THAT MATTERS

KIMBER

The girl doesn't know her own mind yet.
That's nothing to do with it.

MRS. KIMBER (*takes chair back to table, stops
half way*)

I couldn't help thinking sometimes when I've
seen them together—well I *have* thought
it might come to something serious.

KIMBER

He'll be serious, or he'll not come near the
place again. If you're right in what
you're saying, I'm glad to hear it. (*Pause.
Turns, moves up R.C., then down.*) There'd
be no sense in my saying I wasn't.

MRS. KIMBER (*comes over above sofa round to
below it*)

Of course it's really very flattering.

KIMBER

You did right to tell me, Mr. Gill. But you
understand my meaning. It'll go farther
or it'll stop dead right here.

GILL

That's right enough.

MRS. KIMBER

Mr. Pacy is certainly a man in an extra-
ordinarily good position.

GILL

Mr. Pacy is worth seven thousand a year.

MRS. KIMBER

Really?

ALL THAT MATTERS

GILL

Have you seen the inside of the Headland House?

MRS. KIMBER

I've never been. He's asked me. He's asked me, but I didn't care to go.

GILL

Miss Olive can be the mistress of the Headland House if she chooses.

(KIMBER *paces the room up and down*
R.C. *once and looks impatiently*
out at the glass doors.)

KIMBER

It's a thing that shan't stand about, I tell you.
(*Up to window.*)

GILL

You don't, I suppose, know anything of a letter that was written to Mr. Pacy a couple of days ago. A bit of a letter with no name on it.

(KIMBER *up and down R.*)

MRS. KIMBER

A letter?

GILL

Well, never mind if you don't know anything, and you say you don't.

KIMBER

Nobody's written to the man from this house.

ALL THAT MATTERS

GILL

Oh, certainly not. I think that is the motor car outside now.

KIMBER

Ho!

MRS. KIMBER

If you unlock the front door, Stanley.

(KIMBER crosses to L. and exits. She tidies sofa)

(KIMBER and GILL go off by the door to the left. MRS. KIMBER in a state of smirking and flattering introspection folds her newspaper and puts a few things to rights about the room. OLIVE comes in by the glass door. She crosses to the door R. looking very wretched. OLIVE crosses above table.)

MRS. KIMBER

Where are you going?

OLIVE

I'm going to my room. *(Crosses above.)*

MRS. KIMBER

Oh, very well. *(Down L.)*

(OLIVE goes out R. MRS. KIMBER continues for a few moments her attentions to the room. Then KIMBER, GILL and HENRY PACY come in at the door to the right. PACY is a heavy, solid, almost

ALL THAT MATTERS

wooden-faced man of forty, with a touch of the abnormal about him, coming from a certain eccentricity about him, although very slight, in the way he wears a slight, uneven beard about his face, his slightly too large head, and a look out of his small eyes as of a man who mistrusted others, and had a cunning, egotistic estimation of himself. He is dressed as if he was aware of and disliked the something out of the ordinary, his clothes being very good and very normal—a heavy motoring coat, a fashionable cap, and neat simple linen. Under the coat he is dressed in a light fawn-coloured tweed suit with well-shaped brown boots. He is tall and of a good figure, with his hair cut very close to a curiously lumpy skull. His manner betrays a certain doubt of his own normality, making him appear a little awkward, and giving him a habit of watching GILL as if he kept him in touch a little with himself. Happy on his estate he is uncomfortable away from ownership—except, perhaps, at an hotel, where he is

ALL THAT MATTERS

a waiter's nuisance. He is, however, seldom drawn away from home except on the business of further acquisition, and he is on an acquiring expedition this morning. His personality predominates in the room at once, but above all it must be remembered that he is not glaringly eccentric.)

KIMBER (*to behind sofa, revealing deference now*)

Mr. Pacy come over, Catherine.

(GILL crosses to R., sits armchair.)

MRS. KIMBER (*she exhibits a curious mixture of boldness and nervousness, and simpering ease.*)

Oh, good morning, how do you do? (*She gives him her hand.*) How d'you do? You've motored over. I expect you found the air very chilly. Put a chair, Stanley, for Mr. Pacy.

(MR. KIMBER moves up to C., puts a chair. PACY, however, does not sit.)

PACY

I was hoping Mrs. Kimber would let me drive her to Letcombe with Mr. Kimber.

(*This is slightly addressed to GILL.*)

MRS. KIMBER

Oh, thank you, I don't know, I'm sure.

ALL THAT MATTERS

PACY

If you and your daughter would care to come,
Mrs. Kimber.

GILL

It's a fine car. There's plenty of room.

PACY

It holds seven (*he looks at GILL again*), and
I'm only driving Mr. Gill as far as Wool-
stone. There's plenty of room.

GILL

Yes, I'm only going to Woolstone.

MRS. KIMBER (*looking at KIMBER*)

I'm sure I don't know.

PACY

Will you ask Miss Olive?

MRS. KIMBER

I'll find her. She's in the house somewhere.
(*She goes towards the door R. and turns
back.*) Won't you take your coat off?

PACY (*removing his greatcoat*)

Thank you.

(*KIMBER takes it from him and puts
it over a chair, behind table.*)

MRS. KIMBER

Would you take anything?

PACY

No. No thank you.

ALL THAT MATTERS

Mrs. KIMBER (*who is clearly half frightened by him*)

Oh! (*She goes off by the R., still simpering.*)
(KIMBER moves down behind sofa to L.)
(*There is a pause of some moments, during which PACY sits down.*)
PACY rises, GILL then rises.)

GILL (*getting up*)
I'll look at that new sheep-dipper you've built,
Mr. Kimber.
(*Crosses to sofa L., picks up coat and hat.*)

KIMBER
Tell me what you think of it.

GILL
All right. (*He goes out left.*)
(*The two men left alone, there is another pause.*)

KIMBER (*comes down L. to end of sofa*)
You spoke of some business, Mr. Pacy.

PACY
Yes. I suppose you've heard from young
Hyde? (*A step down L.C.*)

KIMBER
I've a letter from him.

PACY
The truth is both you and I want the same
place.

KIMBER
I'm a farmer, sir. I want all the land I
can get.

ALL THAT MATTERS

PACY

Are we both to throw money away, bidding against one another for this young fool to put it in his pocket?

KIMBER

It's a thing that happens very often in business.

PACY

Well, candidly, I want the place.

KIMBER

I'm sorry, sir, if we have to fall out about it. I shall dispute an agreement that I've got with Mr. Gill, giving me the first option.

PACY

And let yourself in for a law-suit?

KIMBER

My pocket isn't bottomless, but I shall go as far as I can, sir.

PACY

Now, Mr. Kimber (*a step down*), it amounts to this: that I am probably in a position to get something that you want. You want the land. You want the right of way to the beach, perhaps you want the house. And probably I am the man that shall get it. Now you have got something that I want.

KIMBER

What have I got, sir?

ALL THAT MATTERS

PACY

Did Mr. Gill say anything?

KIMBER

Yes, sir.

PACY

What have you to say?

KIMBER

I can't speak for my child, sir.

PACY

She's free?

KIMBER

She's free and she'd be hard to please. I should be hard to please in a husband for her.

PACY (*humiliated at the question, so that he sneers a little*)

You would have no objection to me?

KIMBER

Certainly not, sir. But there's the child herself to be considered.

PACY

Of course, of course. (*Moves over to R.C. Turns.*)

Mr. Kimber, I am not often rendered uncomfortable by anything I have to say, but I am not used to these things. I wish you to know that your daughter attracts me very much indeed. I have grown to respect—er—to respect her a great deal. Women do not, as a rule, interest me; but I see in your daughter signs of some-

ALL THAT MATTERS

thing that—that makes womanhood more than an empty name to me. She would make a great difference to my life. I—er—respect her. (*Crosses over to c.*) Mr. Kimber, I am prepared to make an offer of marriage as regards your daughter.

KIMBER

Yes.

PACY

This place of young Hyde's offers ground of mutual settlement, at least it appears to me to. Now, Mr. Kimber, I will not dispute your agreement with Mr. Gill. You shall pay Hyde his compensation, you shall take the place from Lord Latham, and I will provide the money.

KIMBER (*looking sharply up at him*)

Humph!

PACY

I will make it your daughter's settlement. Upon her marriage, Hyde's farm shall become hers. Of you I ask nothing. Hyde's farm shall become your daughter's. It shall be in her name, and you shall have all you want. The land. It shall be the same as if it was yours—that I promise you—except that I retain my right along the cliffs. The whole face of the cove to be recognised as my private property, and the whole place to be private to anyone but ourselves. I think I am offering you

ALL THAT MATTERS

a settlement of our difficulties upon very liberal terms.

KIMBER

Humph !

PACY

It combines business with pleasure. I shall do my best to make your daughter happy.

KIMBER (*keeping his eyes on Pacy, and not yet committing himself*)

Humph !

PACY

I feel more about that side of the question than perhaps I care to show. She will be the mistress of everything I possess. I shall make her ample, probably extravagant, allowance I do not ask you to do a great deal.

KIMBER

Humph !

PACY

I am dealing with you frankly, perhaps a little bluntly, but I cannot hum, haw, or beat about bushes. I come to my point always.

KIMBER (*pauses*)

I will call my wife down. (*Crosses below table to R.C. He goes to the left.*)

PACY

One moment, Mr. Kimber. There is a thing that I must, in justice to both Miss Kimber and myself, mention.

ALL THAT MATTERS

(KIMBER *turns back*. PACY *changes his mind*.)

Perhaps you had better call Mrs. Kimber first.

(KIMBER *goes from the room*. PACY *picks up coat, puts it down again on chair below table, and in a few moments KIMBER and his wife return*. PACY *to L.C.*)

KIMBER (*closing the door*)

I have told you what Mr. Pacy has come to say. (*Over above and down L.C. a step.*)

MRS. KIMBER (*to down R.C.*)

It's rather a surprise, isn't it?

PACY

Have I your friendship in the matter, Mrs. Kimber?

MRS. KIMBER (*who keeps looking at her husband*)

I'm sure I don't know what to say. I'm sure I'm very pleased.

KIMBER

We take it, sir, to be a very honourable offer.

PACY

I fully understand and realise all that I am doing—that I hope to do. Taking a girl from her home to give her one of her own; but I shall make her happy, if it's in a man's *power* to make a woman happy.

ALL THAT MATTERS

KIMBER

Mr. Pacy is prepared to buy Hyde's farm and to give it as a settlement to Olive. It is a very honourable offer.

MRS. KIMBER (*down a step*)

And, of course, we're sure that Olive—of course she's very young yet ; but she's a sensible girl. I'm sure she's not too young. At least she will be soon older—I mean old enough.

(KIMBER *up and down* l.c.)

PACY

I do not propose, Mrs. Kimber, to wait or delay. (*A step to her.*) I am not an entire stranger to her, and so soon as she agrees—

MRS. KIMBER

Of course, it's all very sudden.

PACY

How old is she, exactly ?

MRS. KIMBER

She is just twenty. To-morrow she *is* twenty.

PACY

To-morrow ?

KIMBER (*comes down c.*)

Of course, she's a fine-grown girl. She'll not grow any more now.

PACY

It is my character, my temperament, to dislike waiting. I *can* wait, but not when it is unnecessary.

ALL THAT MATTERS

KIMBER

Of course, that will have to rest with the child.

PACY

Exactly. And I have your friendship, Mrs. Kimber. (*Moves to her, holds hands out.*)

MRS. KIMBER

You will want to see her, I expect.

PACY

There is one other matter that I wish to mention, that it may not come up again some other time.

MRS. KIMBER

Yes?

PACY (*producing the letter written by the Londoners. Hands it to KIMBER*)

I received this anonymous epistle yesterday morning.

(KIMBER takes it first, crosses over to MRS. KIMBER, and MRS. KIMBER reads it aloud.)

MRS. KIMBER (*reads letter*)

“Sir,—Suppose you were to marry Mr. Kimber’s daughter; wouldn’t it be rather a good idea?—A Well-Wisher.”

(*They both stare at PACY.*)

PACY

It puzzled me (*Moves over to c.*), but I found the explanation. I have just come from the post-office. It was written apparently by Allan Hyde—the evening before last.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. KIMBER

Mr. Hyde wrote that?

PACY

You know of no reason why he should have done it?

KIMBER

No. He wants his neck broke!

PACY

I think we had better accept it as an unnecessary addition to the proof of his being insane. But I shall find out more presently. Anyway, it was posted in the letter-box outside his farm, as the postman recognised a peculiar mildew that is on all Hyde's envelopes apparently. I wanted to explain this, in case, as I said, the matter came up some other time. Of course, I have simply not allowed it to influence me. The probable explanation is that he had suspected some attraction on my part in this quarter and foresaw that it would weaken his hand—if you and I, Kimber, were unanimous, so that he sends a letter calculated to, well (*pauses*), put me off. But on the contrary the only effect on me is to make me feel that the girl needs my protection.

MRS. KIMBER

Oh, the man's mad. There's no doubt about that at all. Of course, there's no doubt about that.

ALL THAT MATTERS

KIMBER

He wants stamping out. (*Moves up R.*) The family of them always did.

PACY

The most effective way is to *buy* him out. (*Moves up to table.*) I think we'll have seen the last of the Hydes when he's gone from here. (*Putting on his coat. KIMBER moves over above table to behind. PACY helps him on with coat.*) Burn that letter, Mrs. Kimber. You'll understand I wished *you* to see it. I want this matter to be open and above board. Perhaps you will call her now.

MRS. KIMBER.

And you wish her to go to Letcombe this morning?

(*KIMBER up to glass door, then down to behind sofa.*)

PACY

It will be an opportunity for us to talk a little. Perhaps you will let me take her to tea somewhere. It is fortunate that tomorrow is her birthday. Has she a favourite stone? A liking for any little—trinkets?

MRS. KIMBER

She wears nothing. I have given her jewellery of mine—only little things, of course, but they stay in her room. She doesn't wear them.

ALL THAT MATTERS

PACY

Books, perhaps?

MRS. KIMBER

She's fond of reading.

PACY

Well, Kimber.

KIMBER (*a step up*)

Where's Gill? He's not gone?

PACY

He'll be out there when we go.

(*Moves up to glass door.*)

MRS. KIMBER (*uncomfortably*)

Will you just come with me, Stanley.

(*KIMBER comes down to MRS. KIMBER.*)

PACY

I'll see to the car. (*He goes out L.*)

(*As soon as he has gone MRS.*

KIMBER turns to her husband)

MRS. KIMBER

I can't get Olive to let me into her room. She says she's got a headache, and she's fastened the door.

KIMBER

Ho!

(*Crosses below MRS. KIMBER to R. He goes out of the room R.*)

(*MRS. KIMBER goes up to door R., keeps the door R. open and stays listening. PACY returns by the*

ALL THAT MATTERS

left. She turns to him, obviously uncomfortable.)

MRS. KIMBER

Oh—

PACY

I thought Kimber was ready. All right.

(He goes out L.)

(MRS. KIMBER still waits. MRS. KIMBER over to C. Then KIMBER returns.)

KIMBER

She's coming. You haven't brought her up the way to take any notice of what you say. *(He goes to the right and turns back.)* Mind you, there'll be no nonsense about her coming this morning.

MRS. KIMBER

Well, I hope not. I don't at all know what I'm to tell her.

KIMBER *(turning back)*

Tell her? Nothing! What are you talking about? We're studying the girl's best interest *for* her, aren't we?

MRS. KIMBER

Of course we are doing that. It's to her own interests, of course.

(KIMBER goes off to L., OLIVE enters to L.)

OLIVE

Why did father make me come down?

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. KIMBER

He wishes you to go to Letcombe with me.
You musn't be silly about it.

OLIVE

I don't wish to.

MRS. KIMBER

Your father's upset. You mustn't upset him
more.

OLIVE

Is it about Mr. Hyde's farm?

MRS. KIMBER (*simpering uncomfortably*)
Well.

OLIVE

I hope father will be able to take it.

MRS. KIMBER

He's mad, you know, Mr. Hyde is. There's no
doubt about that. There's no doubt
about that at all. I hardly like to tell
you.

OLIVE (*startled*)

What, mother?

MRS. KIMBER

He's written a letter about you.

OLIVE

About me?

MRS. KIMBER

Mr. Pacy's found it came from him.

OLIVE

No, mother.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. KIMBER.

It's a disguised hand, of course, but it's been traced to him. And they say it's the paper he writes on.

OLIVE

Mother!

MRS. KIMBER

Well, there's the letter.

(OLIVE looks at the envelope. Then she reads the letter. Her manner betrays her.)

MRS. KIMBER

Olive!

OLIVE *(frightened)*

Mother.

MRS. KIMBER

You know him. You know that man?

(KIMBER, PACY and GILL are heard at the door.)

GILL *(off)*

It's a fine car. You'll no meet a better.

OLIVE

Don't . . . Don't ask me anything.

MRS. KIMBER

You know him?

OLIVE

Yes . . . Once . . . It's over . . . It's over now . . . Mother, don't ask me . . . I will go to Letcombe . . . Don't say anything to father.

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. KIMBER

What do you mean.

OLIVE

Mother . . . Don't . . . If father knows it will spoil *everything*. I want Allan Hyde to have the money. I want father to take the farm.

(She draws back as the door opens.)

(MRS. KIMBER moves down to arm-chair R.)

(PACY and KIMBER come in. PACY assumes a surprisingly kindly smile, and he goes over to OLIVE.)

PACY

Ah, good afternoon.

(Crosses over to OLIVE. GILL comes to just inside door.)

KIMBER

Put something warm on, Olive. Mr. Pacy is going to drive us out in his car.

OLIVE

But I'm afraid——

PACY *(smilingly)*

Afraid of the car? I don't drive it.

KIMBER

Put your wraps on and make your mother do the same.

PACY

It's a fine day, with the roads dry, but a rather

ALL THAT MATTERS

rough wind. I should tie your hats on tight and be as warm as you can.

KIMBER (*putting a hand on OLIVE's shoulder*)
Don't keep Mr. Pacy waiting, now.
(*Crosses above.*)

PACY

The great thing is to make yourself warm.
Come on, Kimber. (*Crosses below table.*)

(KIMBER gives a determined look at
OLIVE, but it is lost on her. He
and PACY go out by the right.)

(MRS. KIMBER moves up to c., turns
to OLIVE.)

MRS. KIMBER

You're not going to be silly, Olive?

OLIVE

No, I shall come—(*drops letter*)—I think I
shall enjoy it.

(*They are turning towards the door R.*)
(*Exit R.*)

Curtain

ALL THAT MATTERS

ACT III.

The KIMBERS' Drawing-room.

(MRS. KIMBER is sitting on one of the chairs to the R. of the sofa, where MRS. BOYD, the vicar's wife, is sitting taking tea. The latter is a nervous-looking, neatly-dressed little woman in her later forties, with a manner that does not fail to convey the impression that its very openness, its entire absence of any sort of reserve, is in itself a mark of condescension, exercised also in cottage homes, and surprisingly absent in higher quarters.)

(MRS. KIMBER is dressed now in a green costume, into which her dressmaker has put the very maximum amount of external decoration. She sits rather stiffly in her chair, still simpering sometimes, but attempting no liberties with conventional dignity. On the table near them is a tray with tea-things, and there is also a plate carrier with cake and bread and butter,

ALL THAT MATTERS

*placed between them. Table R.
of MRS. KIMBER.)*

MRS. BOYD (*on sofa, has cup of tea and a handkerchief spread on her lap*)

No, of course not; I didn't mean that seriously, but that is always one of Gordon's little jokes. Baptism the beginning; marriage the beginning of the end. (*Laughs.*) It's very naughty of him, of course. . . . Yesterday he was obliged to marry one of the cowmen up at Chorley, and now that really did depress him. Such a lawless girl. We could never do anything with her, and he quite the opposite and in our choir. A country parson's duties are not always pleasant.

MRS. KIMBER

I suppose they're not.

MRS. BOYD

Nor the duties of a country parson's wife, always. Not often as pleasant as this, anyway. I assure you, Gordon was quite elated this morning. He feels for everybody, and he was quite absurd. (*Mrs. KIMBER picks up teapot.*) No, not any more tea, thank you. He said he'd really never known two people more thoroughly suited. (*Looks at Mrs. KIMBER.*) Gordon sees right through everybody. Oh, right *through*. (*Puts*

ALL THAT MATTERS

her handkerchief away.) I tell him it's quite uncanny sometimes.

MRS. KIMBER (*more smirking than speaking*)
Yes.

MRS. BOYD

You know, Mr. Pacy is a very remarkable man, and Olive an extraordinarily fortunate girl. I don't suppose you realise yet how fortunate she is—and wonderfully clever of her. (*Looks at MRS. KIMBER.*) Mr. Pacy is a man of stern principle, Gordon says of classic principle. He is not understood by the common people. His pride of ownership, his stern upholding of his rights, his rigid sense of duty and what he owes to—to himself—mark him as a man of rare character. Naturally he is misunderstood.

MRS. KIMBER

I find him very nice. (*MRS. BOYD turns away, takes fan out.*) He's very at home here now, of course, and I am free to go to the Headland House whenever I choose.

MRS. BOYD

No *doubt*. And Gordon has always so liked Olive. Such a really simple girl. It is probably that that has attracted him. Gordon described her perfectly. He said she doesn't question, she takes everything just as she finds it, and with a happy knack of finding the *bright side upper-*

ALL THAT MATTERS

most everywhere. And then she has so thoroughly escaped modern pitfalls. She never makes one feel uncomfortable, like so many young people do now-a-days. One has only to look at her to realise that she knows nothing, absolutely nothing—I mean nothing that she ought not to know. That sounds ungrammatical, doesn't it, but it isn't. She'll just make a *good*, rather old-fashioned wife. She has maternal instincts strongly, hasn't she?

MRS. KIMBER

I never talk to her about anything like that.

MRS. BOYD

Of course not, but there are little indications that a mother's eye does not miss. She is fond of babies, for instance. Of course she doesn't know why, but she is. And quite the ideal mother, I should say she'll *make*. And Mr. Pacy has reached a sensible age. I don't think men are ever more sensible than they are at two and forty. That was just my husband's age when we married. . . . There is nothing like a matured husband and a young wife. A man is always so *fond* of a young wife, and the children are so much healthier.

MRS. KIMBER (*smile*)

Of course, Olive doesn't think of anything like that—I hope she doesn't.

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Mrs. BOYD

I am sure you have taken every care.

Mrs. KIMBER

I never liked her going to that mixed school, but we knew she came straight out always.

Mrs. BOYD

Well, everything's ended *very* well. (*Sneer.*) You must have had a dreadful lot to do, though.

Mrs. KIMBER

I have had to be so cautious. Olive doesn't wish people to write or anything, so of course they couldn't know. But to-morrow being Saturday and so many people at Woolstone, I expect it will leak out. There's no doubt there'll be a good many at the church. There's no doubt of that at all.

Mrs. BOYD

People are going to be told to-morrow?

Mrs. KIMBER

Well, there's no doubt it will leak out. I don't like the silence and secrecy of it at all. I regard it as very unnecessary. But *they* both wish it.

Mrs. BOYD

Mr. Pacy, of course, dislikes publicity. Most quiet workers do . . . (*Picking up things.*) I mustn't stay any longer. (Mrs. KIMBER goes to L.) But I was so excited, and I'm

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so sorry not to have seen Olive. (*Rises.*) It was only just you and Olive that I was to be allowed to mention it to (*crosses to R., takes up sunshade from armchair*), you understand.

MRS. KIMBER (*looking towards the lawn*)
I think that is Olive.

(*Crosses to L. above sofa.*)

MRS. BOYD (*goes up to glass door*)
Oh. . . . Yes, Olive, and humming. Oh dear me, how very happy! Now she mustn't mind. It's so obvious that I must be in the secret. (*OLIVE comes to the door. Comes down c. to below sofa.*) Well, Olive.

(*OLIVE wears no trace of a bad conscience, but is markedly different because of her easiness and self-possession.*)

OLIVE (*shaking hands*)
How do you do? I thought it was you, Mrs. Boyd. (*Moves down to below table at back.*)

MRS. BOYD
Why did you think it was me? (*Moves down to sofa.*) Now, I want to know. (*She sits down again.*)

OLIVE
Well, really, I guessed it, that was all. Well, mother?

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MRS. KIMBER (*comes over to her chair c.*)

You might have shaken your skirt, Olive,
before you came in here. (*To MRS. BOYD.*)
The roads are so dusty.

OLIVE (*smiling*)

Mother, I'm not a dog. O, tea, mother, please.
(*Moves above sofa down L., sits L. of*
MRS. BOYD.)

MRS. KIMBER (*pours out tea*)

It's not very warm; but it'll be better for you
cool perhaps. You're sure you won't have
another cup, Mrs. Boyd. I can easily
make some fresh.

MRS. BOYD

No, thank you. (*She looks for a long time at*
OLIVE, *her head on one side, and at last she*
shakes it.) Well, Olive.

OLIVE

Well, Mrs. Boyd.

MRS. BOYD

Now, you don't mind, do you? Of course it's
a professional secret, but you *must* know
that *I* know.

OLIVE

Mr. . . . Henry told me that Mr. Boyd had
said you would like to hear of it.

MRS. BOYD

Now I will tell you. My husband said
absolutely nothing till this afternoon,
then first of all he put me under a solemn
vow of secrecy. Then came the news, and

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next he gave me his permission to run over and see you. Special licences are *very* special things, and a vicar's wife has to be so very careful. Well, dear, I congratulate you. (*She leans forward and pats OLIVE's hand.*) You are a clever little girl, and I wish you every sort of happiness.

OLIVE (*steadily*)
Thank you. (*Pause.*)

MRS. BOYD
I *congratulate* you.

OLIVE
And you congratulate him too, I hope.
(*Pause.*)

MRS. BOYD
Oh, certainly. I'm not at all sure that a man doesn't always get the best of the bargain. But we mustn't let you into too many secrets yet, must we, mamma?

MRS. KIMBER (*simpering*)
Oh!

OLIVE
I don't think the bargain is so big to the man ever.

MRS. BOYD
My dear, how gloomy!

OLIVE
No, not at all. I don't mean it gloomily.

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MRS. BOYD

You mean what?

MRS. KIMBER

I don't think she knows what she means.

MRS. BOYD

That marriage makes little difference to the man, perhaps.

OLIVE

Isn't it called just "settling down"?

MRS. BOYD

Settling down? Well, do you *really* think that that makes very little difference—
(*looks at* MRS. KIMBER)—to them?

OLIVE.

A settling down in his own house. And the woman goes to him; he doesn't go to her, He doesn't go and live in his wife's house. He has a house, just as he likes it, and has always been used to it, and she goes and lives there. He goes on with his work just the same (*pause*), and she gives up hers and starts an entirely new occupation under a new name.

MRS. KIMBER (*uncomfortably*)

Olive, you *don't* know what you're talking about.

MRS. BOYD

A *new* occupation, under a *new* name!

OLIVE

I'm only putting a little word in for the man.

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MRS. BOYD

But no one has run him down at all, my dear.

MRS. KIMBER

So silly.

OLIVE

I wanted you to realise how much *I* stood to gain. (*Smiles.*) That was all. A little cake, mother, please.

(MRS. KIMBER *passes cake-stand to*
MRS. BOYD, *who passes it to*
OLIVE. OLIVE *puts stand L. of*
her)

MRS. BOYD (*feeling considerably taken down*)
Anyway, my dear, I think you are quite right
about the suddenness of it all. It's so
nice to get a surprise in the country.

OLIVE

We both wanted it done quickly.

MRS. KIMBER

Only, of course, it gives me such a little time.

MRS. BOYD

You've left your school, of course?

OLIVE

I left yesterday, without saying a word to anybody. I didn't even bring my books away.
Father is seeing the managers this evening.

MRS. KIMBER

She ought never to have gone there.

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MRS. BOYD

Oh, don't say that. All's well that ends well.
And you go to Scotland? Scotland for
the honeymoon.

OLIVE

To Yarrow.

MRS. BOYD

Yarrow! The Wordsworth country. How
very appropriate. (*Glancing towards the
garden.*) Now I think I see your father.
(*She moves on the sofa and becomes con-
fused.*) No, I beg your pardon. Really,
I beg your pardon. (*OLIVE rises.*)

MRS. KIMBER (*rises, looks at back, moves up a
step*)

Who is that rough man on the path, Olive?

(*Olive moves up in front of sofa to
window R.C. Puts teacup on table
R.C. as she passes.*)

OLIVE (*moving back confusedly*)

It's—it's Mr. Hyde.

MRS. KIMBER

In the garden?

MRS. BOYD

He probably couldn't find the gate.

OLIVE

It's all right now, mother. Father's speaking
to him.

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MRS. KIMBER

He ought to know better than to come across the garden of a house like that.

(She sits down again.)

MRS. BOYD

The Wordsworth country, how very charming. Yarrow! *(she begins to recite)* "And is this Yarrow, this the place of which my fancy cherished so faithfully a waking dream, an image that hath perished. Oh that some minstrel harp were near to utter notes of gladness and drive this silence from the air that fills my heart with sadness." *(She breaks off abruptly and stares at OLIVE, who appears about to burst into tears. MRS. BOYD gets up; crosses over to R.C.)* My dear, how very silly of me. *(OLIVE goes abruptly from the room R. MRS. BOYD stares at MRS. KIMBER. She in turn is staring after OLIVE.)* How very thoughtless of me! Wordsworth at his saddest! But I didn't think she'd mind. I wouldn't for the world.

MRS. KIMBER *(looking towards the door R. whence OLIVE had disappeared)*

She is like that, lately. It's the nerves, I expect; she's a little bit overwrought. She feels it leaving home, no doubt. There's no doubt about that at all.

(Moves down to below sofa.)

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MRS. BOYD

May I go to her? Shall I?

MRS. KIMBER

It's best to leave her alone to come round herself. There's no doubt she's a bit overwrought.

MRS. BOYD

I'm so ashamed of myself.

(KIMBER passes window from R.)

MRS. KIMBER

She'll be all right. Don't worry about that. She's like it often.

(MR. KIMBER comes in abruptly at the garden glass door, looking decidedly perturbed.)

KIMBER *(enters at back, comes down c., stopping short on seeing Mrs. BOYD)*

Oh, oh, good afternoon, Mrs. Boyd.

(Mrs. KIMBER to below sofa.)

MRS. BOYD

I won't stop. *(KIMBER up to door opens it.)*

Mrs. Kimber will give you all the nice messages I brought over. *(Then to Mrs. KIMBER.)* I won't stop to ask Olive to forgive me. You don't mind my going through the garden, do you. *(Goes up.)* It saves anyone letting me out. Good-bye. Good-bye.

(She goes off with a sort of indignation at the series of incidents—

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the scene with OLIVE, and Mr. KIMBER's abrupt entry and evident irritation on his own part at finding her there—which makes her want to exclaim aloud, "What a family, what savages!")

(MRS. KIMBER, with her mind switched off on to HYDE, has permitted her guest to go off with hardly a glance. KIMBER has only waited for MRS. BOYD to go, before he turns to his wife, speaking rapidly.)

KIMBER (*comes down between table and sofa to below sofa, puts hat on sofa, crosses to R.C.*)

There's the deuce now with young Hyde.

MRS. KIMBER

What do you mean? (*Down L. to below sofa.*)

KIMBER (*to R.C.*)

You know it's all been rushed so. There's nothing been settled really, and the young fool's come over to say he's changed his mind. He doesn't mean to surrender the lease to anybody. It was going to be done to-night down at his place. Gill was coming over there.

MRS. KIMBER

You mean to say that's not all signed and done with.

KIMBER

Never you mind yourself about that.

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MRS. KIMBER (*over by R.C.*)

You, a man of business, and you haven't got that done!

KIMBER

He'll come round all right. It's only some trick or other. He must do it.

MRS. KIMBER

You got nothing signed at all.

KIMBER

Look here, we weren't sure till a couple of days ago that Pacy meant to come to the real point—not to the point of marrying her, were we? I've had no time to do anything, but I'd made up me mind that *I* didn't want the place for meself if I'd had to buy it at the price they've valued it at. (*Movement from Mrs. KIMBER.*) Can't you see that if I'd settled with the boy in my name a week ago I should have *had* to have it?

MRS. KIMBER (*up to him*)

It ought to have been done. Leaving a thing like that. It's madness. It's nothing else. It's madness. (*To L.C.*)

KIMBER

You're mad to talk like it. There's no doubt you're not right sometimes. Can't you see if the marriage had come to nothing, I should have had to buy the place, when I didn't want it at the price they're asking?

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MRS. KIMBER

It's madness.

KIMBER

It *had* to be a touch and go. I had to play a bit tricky. But I never thought Hyde would do me a turn like this. He's his blackguard old father over again. But never you mind. He'll come round right enough. He's got to. If he don't—if he absolutely *won't* go, you see if Pacy doesn't drop everything. It's the place he wants, worse than he wants the girl. Now I tell you that.

MRS. KIMBER

It's ridiculous. He couldn't drop it on the eve of the thing like this. It's ridiculous, talking like that—it's ridiculous. (*Picks up hat from sofa, goes up to table, picks up cup.*)

KIMBER (*goes up c.*)

Well, never you mind yourself. You make yourself civil to the boy. (*Goes up to glass door.*) He's got to do it. (*He goes out again.*)

(MRS. KIMBER, *left alone, is in a state of considerable agitation. The next moment and KIMBER comes back with HYDE. The latter is decidedly better groomed, and has an alertness about his eye which is a new feature. There is some-*

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*thing, however, of a hard sneer
on his face.)*

KIMBER (*comes down to L. of large table, HYDE
to head of sofa*)

Mr. Hyde comes over to talk about something,
Catherine.

MRS. KIMBER

Mr. Hyde?

HYDE

Mrs. Kimber only knows me by sight.

KIMBER

I forgot.

MRS. KIMBER (*gives a step forward, bows,
simpering condescension*)

How do you do?

HYDE (*bowing, completely distantly*)

How do you do?

KIMBER

Just send some wine in here and leave us alone
for five minutes.

MRS. KIMBER

Oh, certainly. (*She moves to the door R.*)

HYDE

Don't send for anything for me, Mr. Kimber.

KIMBER

You'll take a glass of wine?

HYDE

Thank you, no.

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KIMBER (*to his wife*)

All right. (*Crosses to door R.*) Here, what are you doing with my hat? (*Takes hat from her.*) Leave us alone, then.

(HYDE *moves down below sofa to down L.*)

(MRS. KIMBER *goes out, and KIMBER closes the door after her; turning back to HYDE.*)

(*Comes down to below sofa, puts hat on cake-stand, moves to c., looks at glass door, comes down L.C.*)

Well.

HYDE (*moves over to below sofa*)

I have told you. I thought I had better save you the trouble of coming over to-night.

KIMBER

You've come to say you back out of the bargain you have made with me.

HYDE

I have changed my mind about it.

KIMBER

You have changed your mind, have you?

HYDE

It's a habit, you know, that minds have a way of—changing occasionally.

KIMBER

You're forgetting you've given me your word on this thing. You settled you'd go for four hundred pounds. (*He slaps his*

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pocket.) I've got your money in there now. You've given me your word.

HYDE

Well, it's a pity you didn't get something more binding.

KIMBER

What? . . . I've got your letter saying you'll go for four hundred pounds compensation. You've got mine accepting it.

HYDE

I've seen a lawyer this morning. It doesn't bind me.

KIMBER

You've seen a lawyer, have you. You can't get out of your word like this, my boy. What are you talking about?

HYDE

A little cautiously about one's word, Mr. Kimber. I've stood seven years of it as your neighbour, and it's rather novel to find you holding up my mere word as a thing sacred in your eyes, isn't it?

KIMBER

What?

HYDE

Like you, I value my word with very few people, and, candidly Mr. Kimber, you are not one of them. I have become a mere business man lately, and I have learnt to put myself a very long way in front of anybody else. I have changed my mind;

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I want to do something different, and I care exactly that much for anything I have said to you. (*He snaps his fingers.*) Besides, what are legal formalities for? You've no doubt put off settling with me so that you could back out of it yourself if you wanted it. You should have made sure of me a week ago.

KIMBER

You'd better tell me straight what you're driving at.

HYDE

I wish to convey to your mind that I don't intend to surrender my lease on any terms whatever.

KIMBER

Look here, Mr. Hyde, haven't I treated you liberally over this matter?

HYDE

You came to my price.

KIMBER

Is your price *higher* now. Is that what you're trying to say?

HYDE (*apparently amused*)

All right. I won't attempt the hopeless—you've time to let Gill know that there's no meeting. (*Moves up R. of sofa.*) Good afternoon.

KIMBER (*goes up c., stands in front of door; heading him off at the door*)

Look here, you don't mean this, Mr. Hyde.

ALL THAT MATTERS

No one could have said anything like this of your father.

HYDE (*laughing*)

Ho!

KIMBER

I ought to have settled with you a bit quicker I admit, but I've had a lot on me head and a lot to see to lately. I don't mind admitting I ought to have put it through at once. I'm sorry I didn't. You're a bit annoyed no doubt. Well I apologise. You'll put this business through right enough.

HYDE

Really, we needn't go over it all again.

(*Holds out hand.*)

KIMBER

Is it more money you want?

HYDE

No, sir.

KIMBER

Well, what do you want?

HYDE

I want to go out at that door. (*Goes to door.*)

KIMBER (*stops him*)

Mr. Hyde (*brings him down*), you must just give me two or three words. (*Takes his arm.*) Just let me speak to you a minute.

(HYDE looks at him attentively, and

KIMBER, who has become pain-

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fully uncomfortable, comes back with him into the room.)

KIMBER

(Comes down R.C.) Look here, I don't want to talk about these sort of things, but you're putting others in a very awkward fix if you back out now.

HYDE

That is nothing to do with me.

KIMBER

The fact is—look here, I don't want to talk of these matters—this is a sort of family business. Mr. Hyde, my daughter is being married, and this farm of yours—it comes into the business. You'll be placing my girl in a very nasty sort of a situation.

HYDE

Your daughter you're talking about.

KIMBER

If you'll let me try and explain the matter. *(Looks at doors.)* I didn't want to go into family matters, or to bring her name into it, but I want you to understand I've wanted to do the best for my girl at her marriage. Your farm is a part of her settlement—an important part—she is being married well at once. There mustn't be a hitch at the last minute like this.

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HYDE (*pauses ; a step to him*)

And my farm, then, is of such importance to this match that there *can* be a hitch if I don't part with it.

KIMBER

It's a matter I oughtn't to have left like this, I know, but everything has been rushed on.

HYDE

So you tell me that if I refuse to sign to-night and let the lease go to you, that then this young lady's marriage is actually *risked*.

KIMBER

You'll be placing her in a very awkward position.

HYDE

Indeed !

KIMBER

I would rather not have spoken of these matters to a stranger. (*Pause.*)

HYDE

Well, I am not quite a stranger to your daughter as it happens. (*Pause.*) Perhaps it is as well that you've mentioned it to me.

KIMBER

You know my girl ?

HYDE

Yes, I do. (*Pause.*) I consider myself under a great obligation to her.

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KIMBER

How do you mean—under an obligation to her?

HYDE

Well, you see, we went to school together.

KIMBER

Oh.

HYDE

We were very good friends while I was there.
(KIMBER *looks at* HYDE.) Oh, you needn't blame her. You sent her there, and she had to meet me. In fact, she had to sit next to me. You must blame the system for that. But I do remember those days with some gratitude, because she did me a great kindness once, that I've always felt I should like to repay her for.

KIMBER

A kindness?

HYDE

Yes, she was kind enough once—I have never forgotten it, although it was years ago—to acquaint me of the fact that someone had written “balmy” on the back of my collar. I was a sensitive boy. I should not have liked to have walked through Woolstone labelled like that, and, although it may seem a small incident to you, I have wanted ever since to do something for her.

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KIMBER (*to whom this conversation of HYDE's seems very crazy*)

Very thoughtful of you to have remembered it so long.

HYDE (*pauses*)

And now you tell me that if I sign this thing her marriage will go through, and I shall be doing something for her.

KIMBER

You will, Mr. Hyde.

HYDE

Can I be sure that I can't help her more by stopping it from going through.

KIMBER

What do you mean?

HYDE (*over to R.C. to KIMBER, with a new sinister terseness*)

That I don't like the look of a marriage that can fall through over a settlement, and that I shall want to know a great deal more than I know now before any—action—of—mine will decide whether or not Miss Kimber takes the husband that you've found for her.

KIMBER

You're talking nonsense.

HYDE

Well, it's earnest nonsense. And it's the sort of nonsense that matters just now and will have to be respected.

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KIMBER

What do you want ?

HYDE

I will sign this surrender if I am satisfied that Miss Kimber has chosen, for his own sake, this highly suspicious lover who marries her on condition that my farm goes along with her. Let me be satisfied on that point and I'll satisfy you on yours (*over to L.C.*). Now that's my offer. Who's the gentleman ?

KIMBER

Mr. Henry Pacy, sir.

HYDE

I'd like to know the nature of this settlement, if I may.

KIMBER

That he buys the farm and gives it to my girl. There's nothing in it like you're thinking about. With the class of gentleman like this—like Mr. Pacy—there's always these settlements, and I don't want any hitch about it at the last minute. That's what I'm troubling about. It's no more than that.

HYDE

I don't like the look of it. (*A few steps L. to fire.*)

KIMBER (*a step to him*)

You say you want to help the girl ?

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HYDE

And I question if I mightn't help her more by leaving things alone. No, I am not satisfied. *(Goes up to door.)*

KIMBER *(follows him up)*

But Mr. Hyde—If you'd only be reasonable. *(Stops him half-way up.)*

HYDE

I'm sorry. It's too important a matter for me to have anything to do with; helping people to get married. *(Goes up to door.)*

KIMBER *(follows up, stopping him)*

Damn it, I'll do anything to satisfy you.

HYDE *(pauses, then looks at KIMBER)*

Then perhaps you'll let me have an interview with Miss Kimber. . . . *(A pause.)*

KIMBER *(pauses, looks at door R.)*

With Miss Kimber?

HYDE

Well, she knows me, and a conversation might convince me that *she* wants this marriage. Then I'd sign; without a murmur. Your *daughter* could satisfy me very easily. You let me congratulate her on her engagement, and let me be just satisfied that *she* wants it.

KIMBER

You'd like to speak to the girl?

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HYDE

Give me five minutes conversation alone with her.

KIMBER

Will she know you?

HYDE

She'll remember me, anyway.

KIMBER (*after staring a moment at him with hesitation and half puzzled*)

All right. If you'll step in the garden there I'll call her down.

(HYDE goes out into the garden off to L., and KIMBER, after hesitating another moment, goes to the R., and crosses below table to R.; opening the door, calls.)

Catherine! (*Comes to R.C. above table.*)

(*He comes back, waits impatiently, and Mrs. KIMBER appears. He looks back towards the garden door before speaking, and then pitching his voice low, closes door, comes to Mrs. KIMBER, and holds door open.*)

Just call Olive down, will you? Tell her I want to speak to her a moment.

MRS. KIMBER

What have you done with him? Has he gone?

KIMBER

Just call the girl down. It's all right. I'll speak to you presently. Go on.

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(MRS. KIMBER *exits puzzled*)
(*Over to above sofa again, waits impatiently. After a few moments OLIVE comes down into the room.*)

OLIVE (*to R.C.*)

Yes, father?

KIMBER

Just shut the door, me girl (*she shuts door*), and come here.

OLIVE (*obeys ; to c. above small table.*)

Look here, my girl, you want this marriage with Pacy? It's not being forced on you in any way?

OLIVE

No. It's not being forced—

KIMBER

Just a moment.

(*Goes up c. He strides out by the garden door, shuts door.*)

(*OLIVE, suspecting something, hesitates about going from the room. Goes up to the glass door, then down and over to R. The next moment HYDE comes in at the garden door. She draws back, half frightened and half indignant. He closes the door behind him, standing just inside the room.*)

(*OLIVE goes up towards door, then comes down R.C.*)

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HYDE (*over to below table R.C.*)
I want to have a word with you please.

OLIVE (*steps back R.C.*)
How *dare* you come here to me.

HYDE (*up L.C.*) (*speaking with a studied
absence of expression*)

I'll not spend the time apologising. I've got to see you. . . . I haven't come to talk love. I've become sane since we last met. . . . You must put up with your handiwork of a sane man for a few moments. (*Comes down c.*) I want to speak to you about this marriage of yours.

OLIVE (*steps back*)
I shall not stay in the room.

HYDE
I haven't come to hurt or insult you. I'm doing my best to speak like a machine now, and to feel like one. The past doesn't matter; at least, it must have been right. Whatever is is right. . . . But your future still seems to lie in my hands.

OLIVE
I will not speak with you——

HYDE (c.)
It lies in my hands, and I want to know what I've got to do with it. I'm not sentimentalising. I'm still trying to talk in

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blunt facts. Facts, Olive ; it sounds ridiculous, doesn't it ? But it so happens that I am an important party in even *this* marriage. It sounds very ridiculous, but it seems—it seems that you cannot be married without my consent.

OLIVE

Without ? . . . (*A step forward.*)

HYDE

I am surrendering my farm to your father.

OLIVE

Yes.

HYDE

At least, I was . . . But I grew suspicious.
Not jealous, but suspicious.

OLIVE

What do you mean ?

HYDE

You know that I was surrendering my farm
to your father ?

OLIVE

Yes.

HYDE

And do you know that the gentleman you are engaged to is providing the money. That my farm is to be your marriage settlement. That my farm is the condition that the gentleman you are marrying marries you on. Do you know that you are part of a bargain between these two

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men, and that if my farm wasn't going with you, you wouldn't be going to Mr. Pacy?

OLIVE

I don't believe you, and I wish to know who let you come into the room to speak to me like this.

HYDE

Your father.

OLIVE

He did?

HYDE

Yes. A few minutes ago. I refused to sign this surrender, I said I changed my mind; and I was told that it was important to you that I *should* sign. (OLIVE *crosses to L., pause.*) After begging of me here to sign this surrender, he practically told me that your marriage wouldn't go through if I didn't. It was my bargain with him that you should satisfy me that at least you wanted the marriage. For his own sake you—wanted this—gentleman.—(*She turns; faces him.*)—No, your father doesn't know anything about us, more than that we were at the school together . . . and I only want you to know the truth. . . . My God, Olive, don't make a mistake.

OLIVE (*over towards him; she has come very near to betraying herself, but she draws herself up at his outburst*)

ALL THAT MATTERS

You wished me to marry Mr. Pacy. But you come here now when I take your own advice—

HYDE

I was mad that night, but I wish it and advise it now—if you're fond of him. That's why I come here. To know the truth and determined that *he* should know it. I can stop this marriage by doing—*nothing*. But if you want it—

OLIVE

I—do.

HYDE

That's the whole point, then. I sign, cheerfully. Forgive me for shouting at you, just now. It was rather curious what I felt then—the whole frightful delirium of it sweeping down on me again. It's rather surprised me after the amazing clarity of my brain during the last fortnight. I've been so awfully sane lately. The most remarkable sensation I have ever experienced—not to have any sensations at all! To do one's work and sleep one's sleep. I've discovered that it's all that matters (*turns up c. a step.*) You'll have *this* fellow on your hands if you let him get too fond of you, you know.

(OLIVE *is simply staring straight ; still with a blaze in her eyes. OLIVE turns away down c.*)

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Oh, I'm all right now, and I'm going. (*Turns up c. to door; he hesitates at the door and turns back.*) But you might tell me, Olive, how soon you propose marrying.

OLIVE (*expressionlessly*)

To-morrow morning.

(HYDE *fairly blinks at the blow, as if he had been struck between the eyes.*)

HYDE

To-morrow morning, and I have to sign at six to-night. Yes it is important. (*Goes up to door. He stops again at the door. He is utterly overwhelmed and crushed.*) Shall you look at the tide to-night? (*He feels all the importance of the moment, and controls himself again; comes down to above chair c.*) Olive, I do wish you God speed (*her back to him*), really. . . Olive. . . Say some sort of a decent word.

OLIVE (*her back still to him*)

Good-bye. (HYDE *looks at her again, and then goes out c. to R.*)

(OLIVE *gives one long, shivering shudder of suppressed feeling. Sinks on to sofa.*)

(MRS. KIMBER *comes smirking in at the R.*)

(OLIVE *springs up.*)

MRS. KIMBER

I thought your father was here. (*Down R.C.*)

ALL THAT MATTERS

OLIVE (*going to her mother, speaking very quietly and rationally*)

I have been speaking to Mr. Hyde. He tells me that his farm is my marriage settlement and that father was afraid the marriage might be upset if he changed his mind about giving up the lease, which it seems he had thought of doing. I see it is true, and that you know. (*Rises, moves up to c.*) I want to tell you, mother, that I *pity* you, very much indeed. . . . To have children and not to understand them at all, not even to know they need understanding, that they have lives of their own, and that one *must* want to understand them. Somehow you always shrank—even when I was very little you always shrank—from everything in me that was myself. You do not understand that part of people, Oneself. I had no alternative between trying to make myself just like you or drifting away from you till there was no understanding. Yet if you had even *tried* to know me, just a little, you might have helped me, so much, when I needed help.

MRS. KIMBER (*moves below table to L. of sofa—she has stared aghast at her daughter. Now she rushes to the glass doors*)

Stanley. Come here, Stanley.

(KIMBER comes in by the glass door.)

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. KIMBER *closes it after him.*

OLIVE *faces them both.*)

Olive! She's not right! She's mad! The girl's mad! (*Comes down to below sofa.*)

KIMBER (*comes down c.*)

What's that?

OLIVE (*turns on them from c.*)

I have told mother that I pity her. I tell you that you have simply, absolutely confirmed now the fear that I have always had for you. (*Looks towards door r.*) You have never had any sense of duty as parents, either of you, ever, and I have always known it. Mother's poor, soulless, selfish little mind, your cruel animal mind. It has never been a very nice home for me. It might have been if you had kept me here, but you let me go out and meet other people, see better lives. Yet I tried to respect you. As if either of you ever had any feelings that I need have respected! (*Crosses down r.c.*) I've got love to give, and I shall give it to the man you're selling me to, because he is taking me away from a home that I was never strong enough to leave myself. Nothing—anywhere—could be worse (*turns up to c.*) than this.

KIMBER (*over to her, seizes her by the shoulder; she steps back*)

What's the matter with you?

ALL THAT MATTERS

OLIVE

You beat me once. Every word or look of affection that I have given you since has been fear.

(KIMBER drops his hand, steps back and stares at her.)

I am thinking how often I have looked at you both and wondered why I should be told to honour my parents. *(She suddenly half laughs, turns R.)* I am going to my room now. When Henry comes I shall be ready to walk with him. *(She goes from the room.)*

(Exit R. KIMBER and his wife are staring at one another.)

MRS. KIMBER

She's mad. *(KIMBER suddenly strides towards the door R.—over to C; puts vases on table.)* Don't go to her. Leave her alone for a bit. She'll come round, but she's not right now.

KIMBER *(crosses to R.C.)*

She'll do something to herself, perhaps.

MRS. KIMBER

No she won't. She's mad. She'll not do anything. She's mad.

(Comes down L.; picks up hat and cake-stand.)

ALL THAT MATTERS

KIMBER

Go up and tell her that there'll be no marriage.
(*Takes her over to R.C.*) I swear by God
there shall be no marriage after this.
(*To L.C.*)

MRS. KIMBER

Don't talk ridiculous. (*Up to c.*) It's no good
talking like that. That's ridiculous.
She's overwrought.

KIMBER (*comes down R.C.*)

What have I done to the girl that she should
speak to me like it. I punished her once.
Somebody had to hit her, didn't they?
You've got to bring your children up.
(*Down to c.*)

MRS. KIMBER

Of course you must make them respect you.
She didn't mean anything by that. She's
overwrought.

KIMBER

It's what she wants now. A damned good
horse-whipping. She's not been beat
enough. (*Over to L.C., then up c.*)

MRS. KIMBER

That's silly talk. You don't want to talk like
that. It's her nerves. That's all it is.
You don't understand her. Leave her to
herself. I'll just speak to her and then
leave her to herself. She'll come round
all right, presently.

ALL THAT MATTERS

KIMBER (C.)

There'll be no marriage. (*Moves up c.*)

(*A knocking at the door R. The girl opens the door R.*)

GIRL

I want to open the front door, mum, to Mr. Pacy.

MRS. KIMBER (*instantly recovering her self-possession*)

All right. (*Puts cake-stand head of sofa.*)
(KIMBER goes up c.)

(*The girl passes across the room and goes out L.*)

(KIMBER is left helplessly with his wife.)

MRS. KIMBER (*crosses to head of sofa, puts cake-stand down*)

Don't be ridiculous about it. You can't make a fool of your child like this. (*Crosses over to R.C.*) She said herself . . . she's only upset. You don't understand her.

(KIMBER moves up to glass doors.

From outside one hears the engines of the car for a few moments. The next moment the girl opens the door to MR. PACY, afterwards re-crossing the room and going out at R. PACY is in his motor coat, and pulling off his cap. He comes in smiling genially.)

ALL THAT MATTERS

PACY

Hullo ! (*crosses to MRS. KIMBER, R.C.—he shakes hands.*) I've told Chivers to keep the car ready to drive you to Hyde's place. (*To MRS. KIMBER.*)

MRS. KIMBER

I think you said you were to be there at six, Stanley.

KIMBER (*comes down c. after a long hesitation*)
Quarter to six.

MRS. KIMBER

And then you've the school-managers to see.
(*To PACY.*) Olive's waiting for you. I'll go and call her. (*She turns to go.*)

PACY (*looking at his watch*)

I'm just punctual. (*MRS. KIMBER goes out R. with KIMBER's hat; PACY turns to KIMBER.*)
I wish it was this time to-morrow, Kimber. I've never known what it was to be nervous before. I was driving myself, and I nearly ran down the last man we want to damage, till we've got this business through—young Hyde.

KIMBER

He's been here. . . . Came to try and bluff me into paying him more money. But he didn't bring it off.

PACY

Perhaps that's what he was thinking about. He'd got his chin on his chest and he nearly walked into my rear wheels. I've

ALL THAT MATTERS

just been down to his place myself; that's where I was coming from. I wanted a word with the old woman there about some people I caught trespassing a week or two back. They've been sending me impudent post-cards—*(pause)*—and I recognised the writing to be the same that was on that letter that I thought young Hyde had written me. The old woman admitted the letter was written by them—there. In fact I got a good deal of information out of her, but never mind. Here comes Olive. *(Moves over to OLIVE.)*

(OLIVE enters ready to go walking. She goes to PACY and shakes hands with him with complete ease.)

(KIMBER moves down c.)

PACY

I want to get off at once, darling. *(Kisses her.)* I want a good long chat with you to-night. It's half-past five, Kimber.

KIMBER *(crosses to door R.)*

Well, I've got to get myself ready.

(He goes to R.)

PACY

All right.

(Picks up hat from table, holds out his hand to OLIVE. She looks at him, then they cross, go off L.)

(Curtain.)

ACT IV.

SCENE 1.—*A Cave in the Cliffs.*

The action takes place within the cave ; the entrance being about the centre, well up stage ; a tall jagged opening with a ray of evening sunlight glancing through and lighting up a narrow ledge of rock within the cave to the R. and about five feet above the floor level. For the rest it is practically dark inside.

On the rise of the curtain, HYDE is seen within the cave groping his way through the semi darkness towards a spot below the ledge, down stage, where the letters "A" and "O" are faintly seen, carved in the stone. Here he lights a match, bends over the spot, and then speaks a few broken sentences ; half lightly, half bitterly.

Poor little chips in the stone ! (*He strikes another match.*) Allan, and Olive ! You're all right. You're cut deep. You'll endure. You've got a nice material law behind you to help you to do that. We mortals would be wonderful people if there was more stone in *us* and less heart. If we'd got a little more strength and a little more grit. But since

ALL THAT MATTERS

we're not built like that, give us cowardice enough, and weakness enough, and dullness enough, to be content with our eating and sleeping. Only don't let us ever think or feel. We musn't do that. But you're pals, anyway, ain't you, you little letters? You're all right. You'll stick to one another, you will!

(He starts up abruptly, looking towards the entrance and backing away from the spot.)

(The next moment OLIVE and PACY appear in the opening from L. OLIVE comes into sight first. She is looking back at PACY, who appears the next moment.)

PACY

You wan't what, now?

(ALLAN crosses over to R. Then over to R.)

OLIVE

I want you to look in here.

(HYDE steps forward and OLIVE starts back involuntarily.)

HYDE *(raising his hat)*

I beg your pardon.

(Crossing over to rock R. up at and off; he passes out.)

(The effect of seeing HYDE is to irritate PACY—he gets to R. of

ALL THAT MATTERS

opening. For the moment OLIVE freezes into silence.)

PACY (*to OLIVE at opening just inside R.*)
What do you want, coming to this place?

OLIVE (*comes on to L. rock just inside*)
I want—(*with a sudden incisiveness*)—There is something in the cave here that I want you to see.

PACY

My dear Olive! I detest the sight of a tripper's holiday haunt. I can see enough from here of where they've cut the stones about. I don't want to come any nearer.

OLIVE

I want to show you where I cut my name once.

PACY

Well, my dear child, I'd rather not see it. I shouldn't have thought you would have done that. I hope it was done when you were not old enough to know any better.

OLIVE

I was sixteen.

PACY

All right now, come along. I may tell you that it won't be long now before this place is as private as the rest of the cove. The last name has been cut here, I hope.

OLIVE

Is this going to be yours, too? -

ALL THAT MATTERS

PACY

As a matter of fact it will be yours. I want to tell you a few things of that nature to-night. That's why I want to get on with the walk. I'm not coming inside.

OLIVE

Is it true that you and father are buying Mr. Hyde's farm to give it to me?
It is very kind of you.

PACY

Your father's told you, has he?

OLIVE (*with just a touch of bitterness*)

I wished to know what was being done for me.

PACY

Well, I hope you were satisfied. I am paying five thousand pounds for the place.

OLIVE

You are very kind.

PACY

We must provide for our little wives, darling.

OLIVE

And this will be mine!

PACY

It's going to be yours, to-morrow morning, after the wedding.

OLIVE

Mine!

PACY

To-morrow morning, after the wedding, it *will*

ALL THAT MATTEZS

be yours. Then there'll be the arranging how we manage it between us.

OLIVE

And we must wire this off, so that no one can come here again?

PACY

There is no right of way here at all. It's a private road to the Hyde Manor House. When that is—yours—of course we can't have it all thrown open *carte blanche* to anybody. We'll have to close the road right off at the top.

OLIVE

That will come in the arranging how we manage it between us. If it is mine I may not want it closed off at all.

PACY

My good Olive, that will all be managed very amicably, I assure you. (*Holds out hand.*) Now come.

OLIVE

There are some old people at the Manor House. They have lived there always. I shall not want them turned away.

PACY

That's one of the things I want to talk to you about. I don't think there will be any difficulty in arranging that.

OLIVE

You are very kind.

ALL THAT MATTERS

PACY

Now, Olive, we are out for a walk. And I really have things to say to you. Come along.

OLIVE

I want you first to look at the name cut on the stone. (*Moves over to down R.*) It is only just here.

PACY

My dear child, I have prosecuted a score of people for cutting their names on stones. There is nothing irritates me more than to see that. I prefer to forget that you have ever done such things. Come along.
(*Goes just outside.*)

OLIVE

There is something about this particular name that I want to speak to you about. There is another name cut with it.

(*PACY remains silent. She waits a moment.*)

Henry!

PACY

Yes?

OLIVE

I wish to tell you something. There are two names cut here. One is mine—the other . . .

PACY (*comes in to R., going nearer to her*)
You wish to tell me something about this?

ALL THAT MATTERS

OLIVE

There are two names cut here.

PACY

I'm glad (*comes down rock to her*) you've told me this yourself, Olive. I was beginning to wonder—but I was very sure it was going to come.

OLIVE

You know ?

PACY

And I'm not angry. (*Takes her hand, patting it.*) Why should I be, as long as you come to me like this to tell me yourself. One doesn't like finding out things about a wife, but when one is told quite plainly about a little childish mistake—don't be nervous about me, Olive. I'm very pleased with you now.

OLIVE

If you know—(*about to go*)—

PACY (*puts his hand on her shoulder ; stops her*)
Tell me just everything.

OLIVE

If you *know*. Isn't *that* everything ?

PACY

What do you feel about him *now* ? That's everything.

OLIVE (*slowly*)

I don't feel anything (*sits rock*) . . . I am engaged to you . . . I am going to marry you . . . That is all that I feel now.

ALL THAT MATTERS

PACY

Well, darling, be quite comfortable about it all, now that you have told me. I quite understand, and I only blame other people. It was cruel to you as a child that you should have been allowed to do anything to make even an imaginary burden for your conscience, but I understand, and I've no blame for you.

(Pats her shoulder.)

OLIVE

You understand.

PACY

And Hyde could never have any *(over to c.)* terrors for me, dear. Do you know what is all that matters to any lover? Just this question. Can I give my—my heart's delight, *all* that she wants—as much as any other man can possibly give her? If one can answer that in the affirmative, there can be nothing to trouble about.

OLIVE

You can give me a great deal—you can give me—*(her hand creeps on to the carved letters)*—this.

PACY

I even like you a little the better, Olive, for this impulse to love somebody. *(He touches hand, and OLIVE withdraws it with a startled shudder.)* It was very natural, and it shows how you need love. That's

ALL THAT MATTERS

all. No more worrying about it. I didn't learn it through prying into any of your affairs. I stumbled across it when I was clearing up another matter. You understand that?

OLIVE

No. (*Turns away; and goes up rocks towards opening.*) I don't understand, but I don't want to, now. We'll go.

PACY (*goes up a little*)

It was the old woman at Hyde's house that I learnt it from. That's why we will have to do something for her.

OLIVE

It was the old woman—not the old man. (*Pause.*) Was it the letter that Mr. Hyde sent to you about me—was that what you were clearing up?

PACY (*sharply*)

What do you know about that?

OLIVE

My mother showed it to me. It was that letter that made me understand—made me realise—

PACY

What?

OLIVE

There are some things unpardonable. There are not many things that I could not forgive, but there are some I could not if

ALL THAT MATTERS

I wished to. That letter was one of the things . . . I was fond of Allan Hyde. You must understand that . . . I was fond of him . . . in a way that made such a meanness, such an insult change me into—into hating him for it.

(Pause.)

PACY

It was well it came, then.

OLIVE *(very quickly)*

What?

PACY

Well that it came to your knowledge. *(Crosses over to L.)* I mean—

OLIVE

It was honourable of you to tell father, that day, and my mother . . . It was honourable of you. And I respect honourableness.

PACY *(getting up rocks L. to opening)*

I had thought often that you were neglected—allowed to run risks that a girl should not—and the effect of that letter on me was that I felt more than ever that you needed some protection. I had felt that about you for some months before.

OLIVE

I know—it is protection I need. *(Moves up towards opening.)* But why did you show it? It was right of you. I am glad you did, but why did you?

ALL THAT MATTERS

PACY

I saw at the time that—that to show it was to be frank, whatever the consequences.

OLIVE

That was right.

PACY (*over to her*)

You have been very neglected, Olive. A very beautiful child like you must have been, thrown recklessly into a boy's company, as you were at that school. It was all inevitable. The most sentimental and backboneless boy falls a victim to the prettiest girl. That's the world, as you'll know some day.

OLIVE

Yes, it's how things are accounted for.

PACY

Children and other young people soon have to learn the lesson, though, that they don't know their own minds, Olive. That is the lesson that you have learnt.

OLIVE

Yes, I have learnt it.

PACY

I like your amenability to reason, Olive. It infuriates most young people to say anything to them about not knowing their own mind, but you see it is true.

(*Silence ; waves.*)

ALL THAT MATTERS

OLIVE

When one is young, one knows one's own soul but one does not know one's own mind. When one is older one knows one's own mind, but one does not any longer know one's own soul. It seems that one cannot know both. *(Pause; wave.)*

PACY

It means that when you were sixteen you went by your feelings.

OLIVE

And now by reason. I offer you duty and obedience, and the love that comes from reasoning, and you will be satisfied. The things that belong to childishness and when one does not know one's own mind, you will never expect. Not the things that just belong to feelings.

PACY

My good Olive, you haven't begun to plumb the depths of your feelings yet, because nobody has properly awakened them. I learnt enough from that good old lady up at Hyde's house to understand the love that you are burning to give, the love that brought you to the hills week after week through all those years, the love that this boy just lit in you, but couldn't bring to any sort of flame.

(Throws cigar away.)

ALL THAT MATTERS

OLIVE (*moves towards opening*)

Let us go now.

PACY (*stops her, takes her hand*)

Olive, till I met you I thought myself insensible as far as any passion went, but I learnt a lesson up at the old Manor House. I've been thinking about those long, fruitless years of love and longing that you gave to Hyde, and the thing's given me the key to something that I never felt before. (*Takes a step back.*) Haven't you noticed a difference in me—even Gill saw it. I've known what impatience is for the first time in my life, and we can thank Hyde for teaching me my lesson. I shall love you, my little Olive, as you want to be loved. (*He goes nearer to her.*) You are like the rocks in here, yearning for the sea's coming. Rocks that are one growth of sea flower, treasures that the sea has brought them, till they are soft and limpid in his arms. The rocks are you, and I the sea!

(*He goes to take her in his arms, but she recoils ; nauseated ; terrified.*)

OLIVE

Don't, please !

PACY (*fiercely*)

I told you not to come in this place. You've only dealt with boys yet.

(*He is still standing over her.*)

ALL THAT MATTERS

(Suddenly the Londoners are heard coming to the entrance of the cave laughing and chattering loudly. PACY swings about. Then he takes OLIVE by the arm.)

Come out of this. *(Crosses to L. of opening.)*

(The entrance becomes filled with the London group. MRS. M. to down R. FENNER down L. PHOEBE to L. of opening, sits. TWIDLE to R. of opening.)

(There is a momentary pause.)

MRS. MASON.

I'm afraid we're intruding.

PACY *(holds out his hand to her)*

Miss Kimber!

(OLIVE crosses over to L. of opening.)

(Then exit to L. The group stand back at the entrance. MISS FENNER speaks just before they pass out.)

MISS FENNER

It's public here, anyway.

(OLIVE and PACY disappear to L.)

KENNITH *(impudently raising his hat as they go)*

Good evening. *(Then he turns to the others.)*

I said, How are you, and he never raised his 'at!

ALL THAT MATTERS

PHÆBE

That was Mr. Pacy, you know, and he'd got
Miss Kimber with him.

MISS BANKS

He said Miss Kimber.

TISDALE

The oracle's worked, then.

(Comes down rocks L.)

KENNITH

Here, come on, let's have a sit down. Doesn't
matter about them.

(He puts his arm round Miss BANKS.)

MISS BANKS

You are!

TISDALE *(coming down to Miss FENNER)*
Say good-bye to the old cave.

MISS FENNER

It has a wonderful charm for me, always.

TISDALE

And you've got a charm for the place, too,
haven't you?

MISS FENNER

He is!

MISS BANKS

You are!

TISDALE

What?

MISS FENNER

Silly, I should think!

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. MASON (*sitting down R. of gulley*)
Quite a relief to sit down and get cool a bit.

MISS FENNER
Yes, it is cool. I daresay it's hotter than we think it is, though.

PHOEBE
I think that's right.

MRS. MASON (*rises ; holds out hand*)
Did any of you think that Mr. Pacy had more of a frightened, ashamed look? Don't you think the postcards we sent him might be doing him some real good? (*Sits.*) I'd like to think they were doing good.

MISS FENNER
Well, it might be the girl doing that.

MISS BANKS
That's quite right.

MRS. MASON
Well, that'd be our work, too.

KENNETH
We don't want to talk of them—they're nothing to do with us. Now we're going to-morrow.

MRS. MASON
Well, I suppose you haven't any of that ginger-beer left?

TISDALE
Sorry, we haven't.

ALL THAT MATTERS

KENNITH (*after a pause*)

Well, we've come to the end of a good thing again. Last lap, isn't it?

MISS BANKS

It *is* a shame.

MISS FENNER

I don't know if you're like me. I simply can't think of London in here. And if I was in London I simply couldn't think of down here.

KENNITH

I never think.

MISS FENNER

You're going up to Scotland, aren't you, Major Tisdale?

TISDALE (*lying back*)

Must put in a bit of practice with the gun sometimes, I suppose.

MISS BANKS

I daresay you're a very good shot.

TISDALE

Not much chance for a bird if I wing him.

MISS FENNER

I'm obliged to be in London next week. I have to see my solicitors occasionally.

MRS. MASON

The judge did a lot of that. . . . Oh, I wish we'd got that ginger-beer.

KENNITH

Well, we haven't got it, 'ave we? I'm un-

ALL THAT MATTERS

decided whether I shall go in for solicitor's work or ordinary law. Let me run your show for you, Miss Fenner, when I've got a practice.

MRS. MASON

Of course he'll be in chambers. I think they'll suit him.

MISS BANKS

I shall have a very lonely time of it, unless I join Gertie on the Continent. I shall be with an uncle.

MRS. MASON

I don't think I could stop in any one place more than three weeks meself. We're fond of moving, ain't we, Phœbe?

PHŒBE

That is right.

KENNITH

Well, time's getting late, you know. Half-past six.

MISS FENNER

How the time does fly, doesn't it?

MISS BANKS

What, do you think so? It's slow to me.

MISS FENNER

As long as we're back in daylight, I suppose.

KENNITH

Be all right in here all night, though, wouldn't it?

MISS BANKS

All night. Oh my! (*Turns away.*)

ALL THAT MATTERS

MISS FENNER

The days are nice and out now, though, aren't they ?

MISS BANKS

I'd rather do it on the longest day meself.

PHŒBE

That's quite right.

(A gull calls.)

MISS FENNER

I say, I don't like those gulls.

PHŒBE

We have a lot on the Embankment.

MISS FENNER

Something so creepy about them to me.

MISS BANKS

That is right.

TWIDLE *(with sudden and unexpected enthusiasm)*

I say, talking about London. Have you ever been on a station in the tuppenny tube when the lights go out ? It's just like this if you lie on your back and look up. I was trying to think I was there then.

(They all look up.)

MISS FENNER

Yes it is, isn't it. Like I should think it'd be.

TWIDLE *(looking out at sea)*

I wonder if anybody could see the lights of London on a clear night.

PHŒBE

You are, now !

ALL THAT MATTERS

TWIDLE

What?

PHŒBE

Silly! Anybody'd think you'd got London
on the brain.

MISS FENNER

He will to-morrow, anyway.

KENNITH

Ever seen the harvest moon?

MISS FENNER

What, on the fields, or just the moon?

KENNITH

Oh, just the moon.

MISS FENNER

I thought I saw it last year.

MISS BANKS

Yes, it was on at Bournemouth. Don't you
remember?

TWIDLE (*sitting up*)

Can't we have a round game, or something.
I'm getting cold.

PHŒBE

Oh, are you? (*Crosses to TWIDLE, sits above
him.*)

MISS FENNER

Let's sit here a bit. I rather like the twilight.

MISS BANKS

Do you? I don't.

TISDALE (*sings*)

"Just a song at twilight."

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. MASON (*sings*)

“When the lights are low.”

KENNETH

“When the flickering shadows softly come and go.” (*He gets up.*) Here—let’s have a waltz. That’s the thing to warm us. Don’t want to be sitting about in a draught like that.

(*He seizes MISS BANKS and they begin to waltz. MRS. MASON jumps over pool down c. TWIDLE and PHOEBE, TISDALE and MISS FENNER follow, and with MRS. MASON sitting down looking on, and to an accompaniment of mixed humming, singing and whistling, they dance.*)

(*After several moments HYDE appears at the entrance ; coming on from the right.*)

HYDE

Here you !

KENNETH

Hullo ! (*They stop and stare at him.*)

HYDE (*rapidly*)

Did you pass a man and a woman on the beach anywhere ?

KENNETH

What ?

ALL THAT MATTERS

HYDE

Did you pass a man and a girl?

KENNITH

We passed you, didn't we? Didn't pass anybody else.

MRS. MASON

But they was in here when we came—if you mean Mr. Pacy.

HYDE

Which way did they go?

MISS FENNER

The other way I suppose—different to the way we come.

HYDE

Well, the water's over the path here—you'd better get out of it.

KENNITH

What!

HYDE

The water's over the path. You'll be cut off by the tide—do you understand that? Get out of it as quick as you can. (*He dashes off to L.*)

(There is a moment of blank amazement among the Londoners. Then confusion, and they rush for the opening with a babel of the following cries.)

ALL THAT MATTERS

KENNITH

Tide !

MISS BANKS

Gertie—Oh, Gertie !

PHŒBE

It couldn't—not the tide.

TWIDLE

He said tide.

TISDALE

Come on! Here! I say. Come on!

MRS. MASON

What is it? What is it?

MISS FENNER

Here! What? All right. Lil !

KENNITH

He said tide—I say !

(The men go to the entrance first. For a moment they keep the others back.)

(TISDALE, KENNITH and TWIDLE get to the opening first, where they stare out, momentarily silenced. MISS FENNER, MISS BANKS, PHŒBE and MRS. MASON, who cannot reach the opening because of the men, press for information.)

MISS FENNER

What is it, then?

KENNITH

You can't do anything out there !

TWIDLE

It's over everything.

(Together)

ALL THAT MATTERS

TISDALE

It's all over the rocks we were jumping on.

TWIDLE

It's like a flood!

KENNETH

It's over everything!

TWIDLE

Like water everywhere!

(The above mingles with gasping ejaculations from MISS BANKS.)

MISS FENNER

Here, go on there, please. Don't block up all the way.

MRS. MASON

Don't push.

MISS FENNER

Let me pass then, please.

MRS. MASON

You won't get anywhere any faster by pushing.

(MISS FENNER up L. rock to opening.)

MISS BANKS

I want to keep near Gertie. *(Goes up rocks L.)*

MRS. MASON

Well, there's no need to push.

PHOEBE

I can't see anything.

(MISS FENNER forces her way to the front.)

MISS FENNER

I want to know why somebody didn't notice this before. That's what I want to know.

ALL THAT MATTERS

PHÆBE .

Aren't you going to do anything ?

MRS. MASON (*with a shriek of laughter*)
Here's some water all coming in down here.

(*She runs about with her skirts up,
shrieking with laughter.*)

MISS FENNER

Coming to a place like this at all. It was
always dottiness.

KENNITH

Well, we got to do something.

MISS FENNER

Let anybody think.

KENNITH

It's over everywhere, you know.

MISS BANKS

Oh, Gertie, we're not going to be drowned,
are we ?

MISS FENNER

I shall want to know why, if I am. We've
got to get through the water, that's what
we got to do. I'm not going to stick here
and drown. I've got my life in front of
me, I have. Here, come on, Lil. (*She
seizes MISS BANKS and makes off with her
to R.*)

KENNITH

Come on, then.

TWIDLE (*to Phæbe*)

Come on.

ALL THAT MATTERS

TISDALE

Come on, Mrs. Mason.

(He seizes her, and they all rush off to R.)

(After they have gone the shouts become distant. There is silence. The cave is empty, and water is seen oozing beneath the mouth. Sea-gulls call outside. More water. Silence.)

(HYDE and OLIVE appear at back; HYDE has her hand, and is R. of her.)

HYDE

You've got to get past those rocks there; round to the road to the farm. That crowd may have managed it, and we've got to. Why are you stopping here?

OLIVE

I shall not go past here. I told him I would go to the cave.

HYDE

You told Pacy?

OLIVE

I told him I would wait at the cave. *(Wave.)*

HYDE

Wait for what? Olive, you must know that the chances are not one in a hundred of a boat getting here in time.

ALL THAT MATTERS

OLIVE

Then *you* go. You go on. Go while there is time!

HYDE

What?

OLIVE

Oh, you go!

HYDE

Do you think there's going to be *two* men leaving you? (*Savagely.*) Why did he leave you like that?

OLIVE

I *told* you he went for a boat. (*Pause.*) Oh, why do you wait? (*Wave.*)

HYDE

Why did you let him leave you?

OLIVE

We could do nothing together. He could just hope to get through it. I made him go. (*Pause.*) It was the right thing.

HYDE

Olive, you can't throw your life away like this. It's not yours. It's Pacy's now. . . . Is *everyone* to lose you? (*Pause.*) (*Wave.*)

OLIVE

I wanted to come here.

HYDE

Here? You *wanted* to come here? (*With sudden, savage intensity.*) Do you remember what this place is? (*He draws a*

ALL THAT MATTERS

deep breath and then speaks.) Our cave.
(*Wave.*) You've not forgotten that?

OLIVE

I have not forgotten it.

HYDE (*gasping*)

Olive!

(*Goes up to her.*)

OLIVE

Oh, don't you understand? Won't you understand?

HYDE (*with hopeless mental exhaustion*)

I no longer understand anything. (*Up to opening.*) I only know that there is death for you if you wait here.

OLIVE (*slowly*)

Yes. Death! Death! Death! I want it!

HYDE (*It is some moments before he understands the full meaning of her words. Then he speaks*)

You . . .

OLIVE

I did not know I should meet you. I thought I should be alone . . .

HYDE

I . . . see—(*His eyes are fixed wildly upon her; his hard breath is audible.*)

OLIVE

Don't look at me like that, Allan, I only wanted to help you at first, but it took me so far; too far for there to be any way out. I can't live. I can't go back. I must go

ALL THAT MATTERS

on—(*Big wave*)—on with it now, if I live. And life, oh it might have been so wonderful—I know that. Oh, I should have trusted. I know I should have trusted. I wanted to be stronger even than love, and I couldn't—I couldn't—Look at the sea—the sea coming. Ah, nothing turns that. Look at the sea.

(The sea is heard rolling ominously; it hits the mouth of the cove and is seen throwing up its spray.)

HYDE (*R. of opening, almost frantically after a short pause*)

You sha'n't, you shall not stay! So the Gods have given me the privilege of dying with you, have they? I refuse it! No, not if you could give me all the sweetness of our love back again, all your dear kisses, all your glad heart that I once had. I wanted you in life, not in death. I wanted your warm hands, not your cold ones. There's too much damned irony in this for any brain to stand. Come out of it.

(Voices and shouting to R.)

OLIVE

Stop! Stop!

HYDE (*swinging round*)

There'll be company then! (*Up to opening. He waves a hand.*) Come on! And the boat'll come next. The elements for a

ALL THAT MATTERS

tragedy have all gone now. Come on!
(*The Cockneys are heard coming.*)

MRS. MASON

Ha! Ha!

MISS BANKS

Gertie!

MISS FENNER

All right!

PHÆBE

Go on.

TISDALE

Come on.

KENNITH

Come on, then.

TWIDLE

Go on.

MRS. MASON

Ha! ha!

(*Together*)

(*KENNITH comes on first to opening.*)

KENNITH

We're in a trap, you know, that's what's happened to us.

(*TISDALE appears next, followed by
MRS. MASON.*)

TISDALE

We're done back there.

OLIVE

Oh, why didn't you go on? Why did you people ever come here?

ALL THAT MATTERS

KENNITH

Got as much right here as anybody else,
haven't we? Go back and look at it.

TISDALE

If you want to know why we come back . . .

KENNITH

Want it all for yourself I suppose.

MRS. MASON (*giving KENNITH a playful push*)
Get along. . . . (*She lifts up her skirts and
runs shrieking down into the cove; comes
down R.*)

KENNITH (*frantically to R.*)

Is it serious? That's what I want to know.
Is it serious?

(FENNER, BANKS, PHOEBE and TWIDLE
are heard coming just off.)

MISS FENNER

Come on, Lil.

MISS BANKS

Oh, Gertie!

PHOEBE

Go on!

TWIDLE

I should go on! (*Pause.*)

}
(Together)

OLIVE (*stands down L., to HYDE*)

Tell them. Tell them they'll be safe. Don't
let them act like this.

HYDE

Listen here. This lady's friend has gone for a
boat. There's absolutely no danger. Do

ALL THAT MATTERS

you understand that? A boat has been sent for. You're all right. Every element of danger has disappeared.

MISS FENNER

A boat?

(*Enters with MISS BANKS, PHOEBE and TWIDLE to opening.*)

OLIVE

It will come I think.

KENNETH

Boat!

PHOEBE

There is a boat!

MISS FENNER

Of course if there's a boat!

MISS BANKS

Oh, Gertie, is it all right?

TWIDLE

She said boat.

TISDALE

It's all right if there's a boat.

OLIVE

I think it will come, but you should have gone. You should have gone on. (*She turns to HYDE.*) Oh, help them, can't you? Don't think of me.

HYDE (*in gully l. of rock, taking a prominent situation*)

Look here! Will you listen here? (*Gets down into gully. The Cockneys are momen-*

(*Together*)

ALL THAT MATTERS

tarily silenced. He takes out and lights a cigarette.) I don't know how the case stands with you, of course, but its my experience that if life means nothing at all to you, and you don't want it at any price—wouldn't have it at a gift—you're safe to get more than your fill of it.

KENNITH

I say, what's he talking about?

(Goes to opening; looks out.)

HYDE

So if there is any lady or gentleman present who is particularly anxious to perish, *one* will do. *(Cockneys interject.)* I can assure you that we are all perfectly safe. She—is our talisman, and we've got charmed lives.

OLIVE

Oh, don't.

HYDE *(going to her)*

We are all right, I assure you.

KENNITH

You know perfectly well the whole question is the boat.

HYDE

And it's coming.

MISS BANKS

Gertie, it isn't going to be serious, is it?

MISS FENNER

Oh, hold your tongue about being serious.

ALL THAT MATTERS

TISDALE

It's serious enough anyhow!

PHŒBE

It might be all right!

MISS FENNER

I was never in anything like it. (*Comes down R.*) I know that.

(*Water comes in.*)

MISS BANKS

(*Follows her down L.*) Oh, Gertie.

MRS. MASON

It's coming in here.

(*She runs about, still screaming with laughter.*)

PHŒBE

Oh, look at mother!

(*A momentary conversation about MRS. MASON.*)

MISS FENNER (*comes down to her*)

Mrs. Mason!

(*Wave.*)

KENNITH

Stop it, can't you!

MISS BANKS

Oh!

MISS FENNER

Of course, if everybody wants hysterica!

(*Together*)

(*TISDALE goes down to her. KENNITH and TWIDLE are at the front, looking at the rising water now.*)

ALL THAT MATTERS

TISDALE (*comes down to her*)
Well, you're not going on like it.

(*He takes her arm, and over to down
R., helps her up rocks, but she
continues to laugh; FENNER goes
up R.*)

KENNETH (*at the opening; suddenly*)
Look here!

(*All stop talking.*)

TWIDLE
This is IT, this is.

MISS FENNER
It's here.

MISS BANKS
Oh, it isn't.

PHOEBE
It is.

OLIVE
Go to them, go to them.

(*She climbs a higher niche at the
mouth of the cove.*)

HYDE (*crosses to ledge R.*)
Stand where you are, Miss Kimber. (*He gets
round to the ledge and calls to them.*)
Here! Get to this place up here. (*Up
to opening round on R. rock.*) Get your
women up here; and don't alarm your-
selves about anything.

ALL THAT MATTERS

KENNITH (*goes down to Mrs. Mason*)

Well, get my mother up, then, somebody.

(*Crosses over to rocks R.*)

MISS BANKS

Gertie!

(TISDALE and KENNITH force Mrs. MASON towards the ledge, and HYDE pulls her up until they sit there. Next he helps MISS FENNER, and TISDALE to get up MISS BANKS. TISDALE then helps up MISS FENNER. TWIDLE helps up PHOEBE. Finally TISDALE, TWIDLE and KENNITH clamber up, and simultaneously the first wave hits the entrance and pours into the cave, to the accompaniment of a scream from the Londoners. HYDE has got back to the entrance, where he can barely stand on a small projection.)

MRS. MASON

Oh, I'm going to drown, I know it!

PHOEBE

I knew that'd happen!

MRS. MASON

Let me get down! Let me get down!

(*Gets on to the lower ledge.*)

HYDE

Stop where you are! (*Another swell. Wave.*)

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. MASON (*trying to get down*)

Oh! I've been so wicked! I've been so wicked! I must get down!

PHOEBE

Mother!

(HYDE gets down among the rocks to where he can help hold her up.)

HYDE

Keep where you are!

You're all right, Miss Kimber. You stand tight there. I tell you all, nothing's going to happen.

(*Another swell and another scream.*)

KENNETH

Isn't there a boat coming?

OLIVE

It will. It will come!

MISS BANKS

I want to go home!

MISS FENNER

What's the good of saying that when you're here. Keep quiet.

MISS BANKS

Oh, Gertie!

MRS. MASON

I didn't think I'd live to see anything like this.

MISS BANKS

Oh, I do want to go home!

ALL THAT MATTERS

MISS FENNER

Talking so silly !

MISS BANKS

I don't want to be drowned.

MISS FENNER

Well, nobody wants to be, any more than you,
do they ?

(A scream, and a swell.)

(This swell makes OLIVE sway for a moment. She puts a hand out against the rocks. HYDE crosses to a ledge by her and steadies the hand.)

HYDE *(to OLIVE)*

It's all right.

MRS. MASON

I will get down. I will. Oh, you don't know
the lies I've been telling.

KENNITH

Here, shut that.

PHŒBE

Mother !

KENNITH

Here, for goodness' sake shout, somebody.
(They shout.) I can't swim, you know.
I hope you all know that. I came within
an ace of buying a pair of them water-
wings this morning. I'd give five pounds
for a pair now !

(A scream, and a swell.)

ALL THAT MATTERS

MRS. MASON

I can't die like this. Not with such lies on me.

PHOEBE

Mother, it's all right, I tell you. Don't be silly.

MISS FENNER

Well, if Mrs. Mason wants to say anything.

MISS BANKS

I've been telling lies, too, awful lies. I must tell you the truth.

MISS FENNER

Hold your tongue, Lil, we're all right. Somebody's going to find us.

TISDALE

It's no good losing our heads, anyway.

(*Swell.*)

MRS. MASON (*with a piercing scream*)

Oh, I must tell you. My husband wasn't a judge. I made it all up. Oh, do let me tell you. (*Catches hold of TWIDDLE.*)

OLIVE

I shouldn't be frightened.

MISS FENNER

Let her speak if she wishes to.

MRS. MASON

Do let me tell you. I can't bear to think of anything happening and me having it on me. He wasn't a judge.

ALL THAT MATTERS

PHÆBE

Oh, don't, mother.

MRS. MASON

He was under-usher to Clerkenwell County Court.

(Swell.)

MISS BANKS

I haven't got a naval uncle. Me and Gertie keeps a bonnet shop in the Old Kent Road. Gertie, you know we do. I must say it.

MRS. MASON *(rather severely; rises)*

Is that right, Miss Fenner?

MISS FENNER

Yes, it's right. You know perfectly well that everybody tells lies at the seaside.

PHÆBE

It's best to tell the truth, I daresay. I'm glad mother spoke now.

MISS BANKS

We saved a bit, and we started together. Oh, I like millinery! *(Swell. Wave.)*

KENNETH

I may as well tell you I'm in a hairdresser's. Here, let's shout again.

(Swell. Wave. Water in.)

TISDALE

If you'll allow me to tell you, I'm not really a major. But I'm uniformed hall-door

ALL THAT MATTERS

keeper at the Coliseum Hotel. I say,
look at it.

(Swell.)

TWIDLE

I should just like to mention something myself.

(Swell.)

PHOEBE

Oh, you haven't got anything?

TWIDLE

I have, I tell you. I'm not the son of a farmer. I don't know as ever I've been in the country properly. Only country houses. I come from Lambeth. I'm what you'd call a burglar, I suppose. Only I'm on a 'oliday. *(Swell.)* I pick pockets, or anything like that. I've got your watch, Mrs. Mason. I was doing a bit to-night, being the last night.

MRS. MASON

Well, I never. . . . Give it here, young man.

(A swell. Wave.)

TWIDLE *(handing over the watch)*

And I took something out of the young ladies' room this morning—while you was at breakfast. *(Swell.)*

MISS FENNER *(as TWIDLE hands it to her)*
That's my scent-bottle.

MISS BANKS *(as TWIDLE hands it to her)*
My button-hook.

ALL THAT MATTERS

TWIDDLE

I'd like you to have them back. And I had a razor off you, sir. (*To KENNETH.*) And your pocket-book, sir. (*To TISDALE.*) I haven't had anything off Miss Mason. I might have had, but I didn't.

MRS. MASON

Well, of all—

TWIDDLE

I hope if we *are* saved, nobody'll take any advantage of what I thought it only right to say.

(*A swell. Wave.*)

MRS. MASON

It was only right to speak, and I should like to say something now to the young lady—

(*HYDE goes up to R. of OLIVE*)

OLIVE (*from the entrance*)

To me?

MRS. MASON

It's something on the other side of the reckoning. I know you're Miss Kimber. I heard him (*points to HYDE*) say so. I wrote a letter to Mr. Pacy, miss, and didn't sign it, when we was at the old Manor House, and said why don't you marry Miss Kimber, and now I know you're walking out with Mr. Pacy. I've tried to do something for other people, and I do wish you a good husband if we get out of it.

ALL THAT MATTERS

(An immense swell strikes the boulders at the opening, sending up a cloud of spray, while the water pours over with a noise that momentarily fills the air. The Londoners stampede back along the ledge till they are crowded at the farther extremity and practically lost in the darkness. This wave has swept OLIVE from her foothold by the entrance, and she falls forward. HYDE springs to her, and standing waist-deep in the gulley holds her up. As she falls she utters one cry, stretching out her arms towards him.)

OLIVE

Allan !

HYDE

Olive—I've got you, Olive. Put your arms round me ; hold me tight. Olive, I forgive ! Everything. I take it back. We both forgive. We were too weak in life. There's strength in death. There's glory in it. Oh, my beloved, the tide has come on us. Hold me, Olive. Hold me, my darling !

(There is a distant shouting.)

BOATMEN *(shouting off)*

Hi ! Hi ! Hi !

ALL THAT MATTERS

KENNETH (*shouting*)

It's the boat.

OLIVE (*wailing*)

It's the boat—and life. Oh, I'm too weak,
too weak.

(*Big wave.*)

(HYDE *drags her back to the ledge*
and waves his arms shouting.)

HYDE

Hi!—Hi!

PACY (*shouting off*)

Olive! Olive!

OLIVE

Yes, yes!

HYDE

My darling! (*He kisses her passionately.*)

OLIVE

No, no, I cannot! It's too late! I cannot!

PACY (*shouting off*)

Olive! Olive!

OLIVE .

I'm here! I'm here!

PACY (*shouting off*)

Hold on, Olive.

OLIVE

I'm here!

KENNETH

Are we saved?

ALL THAT MATTERS

HYDE

No, we're lost! We're not big enough to die.
We're only small enough to live.

PACY

Olive!

HYDE

I've got her, Pacy. I've got her for you.
She's here, Pacy!

(OLIVE has collapsed in HYDE's arms.)

I've got her, Pacy. I've got her for you,
Pacy!

Curtain.

SCENE 2.—*The Sheep-Fold.*

(The scene is practically a silhouette of the fold with dawn-clouds passing across the hill line. HYDE is by the hut, standing motionless, outlined against the sky. ISAC comes to the may-trees to the left.)

ISAC

Master—Master Allan.

(HYDE walks towards him from the hut, speaking savagely.)

HYDE

Who's that? What do you want here, Isac?

ISAC *(to up c.)*

I ask your pardon for the liberty, sir, but I'm troubled. Troubled about you, sir.

HYDE

What do you mean by that?

ISAC

I seen you come up the hill, and it troubled me, sir, and it being your last night here, and the look on you, sir. You should be thankful that the little missy was got from the cave all right, sir.

(Pause.)

ALL THAT MATTERS

HYDE

I am thankful, Isac.

ISAC

God help me, Mr. Allan, I'm an old man. I wants to go down to the grave in some sort of peace. (*A look at the gun. Up to hurdle R. of HYDE.*) You'd not add this to the weight of all my years.

HYDE

What do you mean?

ISAC (*comes away a step, then up to HYDE*)
I fetched the doctor the night you was born, sir. I've a sort of right. (*Touches him on R. shoulder with L. hand.*) I want you to come back home.

HYDE (*rises up—turns*)

I'm coming home, my good Isac. I'll be there right enough before long. What's the matter with you. You don't want to look after me.

ISAC

I'm in God knows what trouble about you, sir. The way you've looked and talked. I don't like it. What I wants to-night, sir, is for you to come along home with me. It's bad enough to reach my age and see the thing you scarcely thought about simply in front of you. But for God's sake let me leave the young in all their health and strength behind me.

ALL THAT MATTERS

HYDE

Get on down. You'll see me home, I tell you, presently.

ISAC

I'll see you, yes. (*Puts his hand on HYDE's R. hand.*) You're taking things too much to heart, master; I know you are.

HYDE (*pauses—laughing*)

What do you think I've got to take to heart. I've made a good bargain for myself. I've got four hundred pounds in my pocket. I've done very well. I've got nothing to take to heart, if I wanted to.

ISAC

Well (*crosses over to hut slowly*) I knows as chent true, then, and I byent going home without 'e. (*Picks up gun with L. hand; turns to HYDE.*) What did you bring the gun up here with you for, master?

HYDE (*moves towards ISAC*)

Put that thing down.

ISAC

I've got un, sir, and I'll keep un. (*HYDE moves away to back c.*) Look yer, master, listen yer. I be an auld man, and it wunt be long now before I be dead and the equal of anybody. Thee must let I talk to 'e straight and frank like.

HYDE (*holds out R. hand*) (*A step to ISAC*)
Hand me that gun.

ALL THAT MATTERS

ISAC

I will if you'll listen to me. And you can blow me own brains out if you wunt. Just listen to I, sir. (*Pause.*) I want to tell 'e, sir, as I knows what troubles be. I yent gone through all my life without no trouble. But I'll tell 'e now I've learnt this much. There's plenty of trouble in this yer world, trouble as'll make a man fit to hang hisself to-day as byent of no consequence at all to-morrow, in a manner of speaking. Trouble as you'll laugh at.

HYDE (*moving over to R.C. of hurdles*)

You'll do no good, Isac.

ISAC

(*Pause.*) I'll tell 'e (*moves over a few steps to c.*) what trouble I've had, sir. My brothers and my sister. I lived to see 'em die, one arter the other, seven of 'em.

HYDE

I've had none, and there's precious little difference there.

ISAC

I've lost a child, sir! She was only a little un, but I lost her!

HYDE

Isac, you can do no good. I know you've had your troubles.

ALL THAT MATTERS

ISAC

tell 'e one more, sir. (*Pause. A step nearer.*)
I lost the girl as I should have had.

(HYDE *makes no reply. He only looks at ISAC, and there is a pause of some moments. HYDE moves down a step.*)

ook here, master, I *knows* as that was the hardest thing of all. (*Moves down a step.*) I was young like you, but I wasn't no scholar. I was only a young working chap, but you believe me, sir, love be very much the same to all on us. I knowed what it was to listen for her coming of an evening when we used to meet on these very hills here. I know'd what it was to lie in bed o' nights and just think how gay her eyes was and how soft her cheeks were, and think how she'd smile at I, and all the little faces her could make. I knew what it was just to *live* for the day when she'd walk down to the church with I and be mine, and we'd be alone and together for always. Aye, I pictured it all. The little house and she looking for I when I comed home of nights. Don't you think as you be the *only* one as knows what that trouble be, sir.

HYDE

Why are you saying all this to me?

ALL THAT MATTERS

ISAC (*moving over to HYDE*)

Because I know 'tis your trouble (*puts his hand on HYDE's shoulder*) too. I ain't seed her and you for nothing, these years, sir. And when you fell out, I knowed what it was going to be then, for I knowed what she was to you.

HYDE (*over to up R., then back to ISAC a few steps*)

You think I ought to stay up on the hill here and listen to her marriage bells!!

ISAC (*moves up to L. of HYDE*)

Bells be ringing like that all over the country, every day, sir. And what odds do it make to the winds blowing on just the same, and the birds whistling in the trees, and the sun shining? Master, I heard them same bells chime for a marriage, and not long arter I heard them tolling, and I tell you, sir, that be a wuss sound than t'other, for there's nothing you can do arter that!

HYDE

What's the difference? Marriage bells or bells that toll. The first are tolling for me and *my* life.

ISAC

I knowed it both ways, sir. I lost her first. Her went to t'other, and then her died,

ALL THAT MATTERS

but if I could only know as she was just *alive* somewhere, as she could hear the birds and feel the winds and the sun, I'd work as merry as any boy at plough. You ain't got half a cup full of sorrow, sir, just to hear they bells, for it's *death* that matters, that's the thing as can't be put right.

HYDE (*sneering*)

Death !

ISAC (*comes down L. of HYDE*)

Aye, Master Allan, death—death. Look all about you, can you see the mist on the hills, can you hear the stir of the sheep down in the fold, can you draw in the smell of the morning, and say the word death, sneering as you said it then? Oh, master, 'tis easy to talk lightly of it, but you've got to be alive, you know, to talk of it at all. (*He comes nearer.*) Have you ever seen a young man, or a young girl, lying there in the stillness? The girt silence, the terrible nothingness—the fearful nothingness! Oh, master, you can't talk lightly of it: you can't wish it. A man in his wisdom can only ask for life—life and a goodness of heart to understand it.

HYDE (*after a long pause*)

Get me something down at the house, then. Don't worry any more about me, Isac.

ALL THAT MATTERS

I'm all right now. Thanks for what you've said.

(He gives him his hand.)

ISAC

You'll come on down, sir?

HYDE

Yes, I'll be with you soon. You go on.

ISAC

I've got your word on't. 'Tis a word as be good enough for I at any time, sir. I'll be getting on. And dang the old gun.
(He throws the gun down by crusher R.)
I've got your word on't.

(He turns towards the opening)

When they bells ring you'll take my advice, and you'll just hearken to them, sir. And when they rings you just say this to yourself, "She be alive. She be alive. Her cheeks is red, her eyes is bright. She be alive. Thank the good God she be alive."

HYDE

Good-night, Isac.

ISAC

Good-night, sir. Or rather good morning. For 'tis near morning now.

(He goes off to the right.)

HYDE *(He waits for the old man to go ; then he bows his head and speaks in broken voice)*

ALL THAT MATTERS

"She be alive. She be alive. (*Kneels.*) Her cheeks be red, her eyes is bright. She be alive. Thank the good God, she be alive."

(Suddenly there comes a strange half-choked whisper from back L. OLIVE is just visible in the dim light.)

OLIVE

Allan !

(HYDE looks up. The whisper is repeated.)

(HYDE turns now and stares towards the spot. It has grown much lighter, the sky faintly red. OLIVE is seen by the trees.)

(HYDE almost whispers when he speaks.)

HYDE

Olive !

OLIVE (*to c.*)

Allan !

HYDE

What are you doing ?

OLIVE

I want you, I want you in life. I know, I understand. Allan, the tide told me, the tide told me, I want life, I want love, I want courage, I want you.

ALL THAT MATTERS

HYDE (*a step forward*)
You haven't come to me.

OLIVE
Take me, Allan, take me away from everybody.

HYDE
You've come to me!
(She goes to him.)

(Curtain.)









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